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THE RIGHT TO BE DECENT

by Ruth Frisbie Moore

In nothing were the writers of the last decade more successful than in filching from the "decent" their good name. Despite Shakespeare, the filchers were immoderately enriched; but the "decent", beyond a doubt, have been left poor indeed. At the beginning of the present decade there was much talk of restitution; a radical change in outlook was loudly vaunted, and the burning questions of the twenties were scornfully labelled "dead horses". But though several years have passed, the "decent" are scarcely able to note any real improvement in their status. To the very young the modern literary strictures on the Age of Decency seem to have all the weight of historical documents; survivors from that ill-famed age are constantly being told with grim firmness, "You, in your generation, thought *thus* and felt *so*". And certainly, in this country, indecency is no longer the treasure of the sophisticates; for the doctrines of the reformers have become the passions of the mob. A horde of tabloid minds have acquired the moralist's fervour and the psychologist's lingo; thousands who never read the classics for their artistry are now, with tongue in cheek, poring over unexpurgated editions. The scarcely literate storm the box office for interminable plays, so theoretical and prolix that without their frankness they would be of interest only to the psychologist or the serious student of the drama. The "decent" have become popular figures of fun; journalists chant glibly—

> Old Grover Gates
> Reads Dickens and Thackeray;
> Hasn't much use
> For psycho-quackery.

A point has been reached where it is almost as heretical to question the dulness and futility of life in the Age of Decency as it once was to doubt the flatness of the earth. At the moment, the prospect for any restitution to the "decent" looks dark indeed.

And yet their claim, it seems, might be quite justly pressed. All lovers of fairness must surely feel that the "decent" have been far too long in a desperate plight. Their ill repute has, for many years, rivalled that of

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the Jews in the Middle Ages. By fictionists and philosophers alike they have been endlessly pictured as crucifying the human spirit. The less courageous among them have, in consequence, tried to conceal their moral lineage, assuming vices though they had them not, and masquerading as carnalists, usually too blatant or too tremulous. Those who would not dissemble have had need to be tough-minded; for with all the traditional iniquities tenderly treated and explained away, the discarded passion from the old taboos has been flung with zealous glee against "decency". Whichever way the "decent" have turned for years they have met with an attack of one sort or another—the swift rapier thrusts of the bitter satirists, showers of bird shot from the scribblers, the fierce bludgeoning of turbulent reformers, or ponderous blows from the sombre realists. Even by fleeing entirely from fiction the harried "decent" have not found peace, but have run up continually against some formidable card index on their shortcomings, or a melancholy picture of themselves by an earnest moralist. Indeed, the modern literary treatment of the "decent" has often, in its thoroughness, suggested the manner in which Joshua and his men disposed of the five Amorite kings—"They put their feet upon the necks of them" and "smote them and slew them", "hanged them on five trees . . . until the evening", "took them down . . . cast them into the cave . . . and laid great stones in the cave's mouth".

Nor has this been a mere paper war; in devoutly sophisticated circles it has long been customary to refer to the incurably "decent" as though they suffered from an unspeakable flaw; the lifted eyebrow and the bated breath have not been out-moded, but reserved for "virgin youth"; the spiritual tar and feathers, barbaric as ever, have been applied exultantly to the "inexperienced" and the "verbally fastidious". Blasphemy against the gods of the moment has not been tolerated; a supposedly scientific observer of the current scene has noted repeatedly, with evident satisfaction, that in progressive groups any mention of the old affections is invariably greeted "with gales of laughter". In the recent upheaval of the moral order practically the only right denied to any one has been the right to be "decent".

Certainly it is a right that no one would care to claim if the contemporary portraits of "decency" were just and accurate ones. Many seasoned readers do not find them so, but feel rather that the "decent" of late have all but become an esoteric cult, whose inner spirit and practices only the initiates know. The very word "decent" has been treated rather scurvily. Many of us mourn its present disrepute, for, in its original significance, we had clung to it hopefully as a sound floating spar from the wreck of the old idealism. It is a word with an excellent history; the Earl of Shaftesbury, whom Havelock Ellis ranks high among the philosophic aesthetes, describes morality as "the taste of beauty and the relish of what is decent". But ever since Bertrand Russell first used the word in quotation marks, as a term of opprobrium, it has steadily lost standing, and has acquired meanings undreamed of in the dictionaries. For years it has been commonly used as a blanket term of contempt, denoting, in two brief syllables, furtive, cowardly, intolerant, brutal, stupid, gregarious, and utterly insincere. Many of the apostolic writers have chosen wholly to disregard its past and to declare with John Cowper Powys, "Decency is a mere modern barbarism, the evocation of morbid vulgarity and a perverted heart". The "decent", willy-nilly, have put on the Devil's cloak.

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But with the cloak has gone none of the wisdom and courage and charm with which Milton invested the Devil; all these the traducers of the "decent" have kept for themselves. This has been vividly revealed in the consciously sophisticated novel of the day which often seems merely an inverted form of the old morality tale, with Virtue as a graceless crone, but Adultery in ermine, with all the Perversions swaggering around in purple robes, and the Œdipus Complex running in and out with bells on. Form as well as character has, not infrequently, the same mediaeval simplicity; the triangle is less in evidence than the sharply defined straight line, with on one side the "decent", practically all fools, tyrants and hypocrites, speaking utter fustian, and on the other, a horde of wise, brave, penetrating creatures, preferably young, crying to high heaven in Saxon monosyllables and scientific claptrap, and struggling, more or less futilely, against psychological infant damnation.

With such a direct and forceful mode of attack it should have been easy to annihilate the "decent" properly, if only the transposed virtues had proved less hard to handle. But they have had difficulty in living down their past. A few of the more ironic novelists have entirely escaped the question of moral victory by making *all* the combatants thoroughly contemptible; but among the less embittered writers it has often been hard for the imaginative reader to be certain, without aid from the critics, whether he has in hand a progressive novel or a satire upon one. In books loudly proclaimed radical it has proved confusing to find the "decent", though despoiled of their armour, running off with what honours there are, because the exponents of the New Virtue are too feeble to carry their weapons. Any persistent reader of contemporary fiction must frequently be reminded that it was not the young gallants of Ithaca but only the ragged and weary Ulysses who could draw the mammoth bow.

It has, indeed, long been diverting to note how often the current novel, through its flimsy rebels, seems to play into the hands of the "decent"; endless examples could be cited. Milly, in Ellen Glasgow's *They Stooped to Folly*, might have been created to illustrate Thoreau's views upon the futility of changes which call merely for new clothes and not for new wearers of clothes. No matter how often she is called good, sincere, and courageous she actually seems merely the obverse of her pitifully opinionated mother; with the same narrow and ignorant intensity the one longs to be "free" and the other to be "safe". Loveday in G. B. Stern's *Debonair* lies, steals, forges a passport, and proves herself, conclusively, one of the most unscrupulous young women in fiction; but at the close of the book her lover declares, apparently in deadly earnest, that her supreme virtue is her *honesty*. The "decent", upon reading this, are able to understand the wrath of the gods when Prometheus stole their fire.

Some of the most recent novels offer this circuitous defense of "decency" in striking fashion. *The Story of Julian* by Susan Ertz might almost be thought a miniature of *Don Quixote*, designed to end with its absurd raillery the age of the pious sophisticates. It is all but impossible to follow the critics in regarding it as a serious interpretation of intelligent progressives. But of course Miss Ertz has always loaded her literary dice heavily. She is a master in depicting prudish immorality; one is never allowed to forget that her nobler women all feel, poignantly, a moral obligation to "go wrong". And they seem to feel an equal obligation to talk endlessly about it. Never have they talked so much and, from the standpoint of the "de-

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cent", so impressively, as in *The Story of Julian*.

Pauline Trellett, one of the major characters, is a composite of all the New Virtues. She is so brilliant that she may easily become the greatest "living woman writer"; she is broad, sympathetic and thoroughly "experienced"—she doubts, indeed, if a proper general attitude toward human relations can be attained without "complete anarchy, complete freedom from restraint". And with all this she has a remarkable charm. "The by-product of living was for her a kind of spiritual alcohol, the fumes of which mounted to her brain", and "her heart had a syncopation in its beat, a gently mirthful rhythm". And yet this is the way she talks to her lover over an intimate luncheon, when she has begun to suspect that their affair must come to an end because of her unwillingness to share him with his loathsomely "decent" wife: "Lewis, now that we've touched on that oft-recurring topic, love, there are a number of things I'd like to say about it. I've been storing them up for some time". She says them, grandiloquently, closing with a passage almost unrivalled in the casual conversations of romance. "Love brags so, Lewis, it has such flaunting airs, it talks so much of its own strength and beauty even under the shadow of its own shameful death. It's fantastic and terrible that love should die. It is the tragedy of tragedies. That lovers should die is no tragedy compared with it. But as all things must die or change, it's better, I think, that it should never be born at all than born to suffer such indignity."

There is much more of this; but strangely enough the lover, who is also fascinating, brilliant and creative, does not, at the first opportunity, make his permanent escape. Rather, he beseeches Pauline passionately to have tea with him the next day, and later urges his young son to cultivate her, since she possesses the highest type of feminine mind, "extraordinarily clear and unprejudiced, and almost untouched by sex".

This is heartening to the "decent", who have long been made to feel that dulness was their special prerogative. Bertrand Russell, in assigning it to them, has repeatedly claimed that it was the inevitable result of the checks imposed by "decency" upon the curiosity of youth. He has even accounted for women being more stupid than men in recent ages by the higher degree of "decency" demanded of them. On the basis of her experience, Pauline Trellett is difficult to explain. Perhaps much can be said for the Victorian method of naming characters allegorically; there is not a chance in the world that any earnest reader would overvalue Trollope's Lady Dumbello.

But the most zealous decriers of "decency" may protest that Pauline Trellett was born a bit too soon to benefit fully by the new moral order, that only the very young could reveal its workings in perfection. Unluckily, in this same novel, Hildegarde, scarcely eighteen, and said by serious critics to "typify, charmingly, the candour and intelligence of contemporary youth", does little for this theory. It is true she knows everything. But there is a depressing pertness about her endless epigrams on love, history, Emily Dickinson, science, religion, birth control, the Œdipus Complex, nudism and the Fall of Man. She is, in the same breath, cocksure and sentimental. "Isn't it sad, Julian, that our poor darling parents never had such lovely times as we have?" She loathes intolerance in others, but she herself would like to "pick up all the people who belong to the past and are always hankering after it, and drop them into the waste-paper basket where they belong". Young as she is, in her dealings with Julian she foreshadows the matriarchy which

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Count Keyserling so gloomily predicts. Perhaps the only real emotion which the honest reader of the book experiences is regret that when poor Julian rides his motorcycle over the cliff he does not escape forever the tirades of this embryo Mrs. Caudle. It is surely ironic that the most earnest of these new morality tales should often leave one feeling, quite ardently, that there are far worse fates than having been suckled in an outworn creed.

The brilliant moral radicals fare little better at the hands of Robert Herrick in *The End of Desire*, a strangely explicit book to come from a writer who only a year or two ago was finding contemporary fiction painfully burdened with "biology", "honesty" and the "odour of the boudoir". This story is less convincing than some which Mr. Herrick has termed "mere garbage"; for it is difficult to invest the amorous antics of grandparents with charm and inevitability. But obviously we are intended to be deeply moved by the plight of the hero, an elderly, distinguished alienist, who is tragically aggrieved at finding he cannot successfully combine the licence of an alley gamin with an idealistic dream of love among the lilacs that is worthy of a convent maiden. He is late in discovering the penalty attached to eating one's cake. Some of these learned and liberated heroes make it seem probable that the legend about the wondrous wise man and the bramble bush has anthropologic significance.

But of course many of the novelists have assailed "decency" without brandishing unduly that tricky weapon, the new virtue, which undoubtedly tends to twist in the hand. In the year just past every form of attack has been offered. Richard Aldington, in *The Colonel's Daughter*, resorts to the highly popular method of promptly flaying alive all the "decent" who venture into the story; any credulous reader of his book might well doubt if such a thing as a sincere and intelligent decency can exist today. Margaret Kennedy's *Return I Dare Not* is typical of numberless volumes where the "civilized" have laid "decency" away with the lavender and old lace. In the new Victorianism the characters are not allowed the defects of their qualities. Mr. Barrett of Wimpole Street must add twentieth-century vices to his native ones; and never was there a more synthetic heroine than Mary in Cronin's *Hatter's Castle*. She is precisely everything that the modern psychologists would have a luckless but lovely Victorian maiden be; such a combination of moronic innocence, and consequent easy virtue, with self-reliance, gentleness, wisdom, and fortitude the last generation surely never beheld in the flesh. From the standpoint of sheer intelligence Mary would make a poor showing beside some equally sheltered heroines of real Victorian literature who did not wear blinders, and seemed unable to keep ears shut and brains fallow for seventeen years.

But few of the current fictional attacks upon the "decent" have been more devastating than Evelyn Scott's all but endless *A Calendar of Sin*. This is no sham moral battle, but a grim forty-year war against "decency", with lumbering catapult and battering-ram. The surviving "decent" have long accepted with some equanimity the Aldington mode of attack; such contemporary scenes may within their limits be accurate enough. It might be argued with considerable show of reason that any of the "decent" who dare invade the companies assembled by Huxley, Aldington or Waugh richly deserve drastic treatment—this is no place for them. But a saga which deals at great length with the period in which "decency" was the generally accepted code and which yet rigorously

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excludes all actually decent persons, rivals the proverbial *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out. When one considers the wide chronological and geographical scope of *A Calendar of Sin*, it seems little short of miraculous that not a single well-adjusted character steals upon the scene. Those who in youth touched the edge of the Victorian era find themselves wondering how all the wise, whimsical, witty and courageous creatures which that age undoubtedly produced managed to keep out of the way. The disproportion of the picture might be accounted for by the novel's subtitle, *American Melodramas,* were it not for the fact that here is the matter but surely not the method of melodrama. Rather the treatment is so grimly deliberate that it recalls E. M. Forster's phrase about "undermining the universe in too workmanlike a manner, looking round for this tool and that". Indeed, *A Calendar of Sin* might have been written with all the books of the modern moralists spread open on the table; not a charge brought against "decency" in the last twenty years is omitted. So relentlessly is the implication of the title followed through the two huge volumes that they might well end with a triumphant Q.E.D. This is the third-degree method of dealing with "decency"; many of those who know better may, by the thousandth page, be willing to concede that the "decent", even in their heyday, must have been a thoroughly rotten and feckless lot. Certainly this is the realism which James Branch Cabell finds so much less charitable than life.

It scarcely seems possible that any reader could fail to recognize in *A Calendar of Sin* that "novelist's touch" which, according to Norman Douglas, is so selective that "what the author says may be true and yet by no means the truth". But seasoned critics have hailed it as a peculiarly just and penetrating study of the code of "decency" in action, revealing clearly the bases of American character and culture, and accounting fully for our present social, economic and political unrest.

This is a shade too much. Nothing could illustrate more vividly the divine rightness that the standard strictures against "decency" have through endless repetition finally acquired. Even the most forbearing among the "decent", at the risk of being burned for intellectual heresy, feel impelled at last to pose the question that has been troubling them sorely through all the years of this new inquisition—Why have not even the most scientific and scholarly critics of "decency" turned over the shield? There is much of interest and significance on the other side.

It is easy enough to see why the novelists, in this highly commercial age, choose to ignore it; anyone mulling over his memories in search of fictional material would realize instantly that, today, with the prevalence of cinema tastes, the market value of a wanton aunt far exceeds that of a sainted grandmother. And of course the *minor* moralists are easily satisfied. Many of them are merely that by-product of modern scholarship, the case-collectors, who can assemble, file and classify, but who do not know when to make deductions nor, more important still, when not to make them. They are not in the least concerned that the "decent" frequently fit no better in the narrow Freudian pigeon-holes than Alice did in the Rabbit's house, with her arm out the window and her foot up the chimney. Others who have long provided much of the padding for our magazines are simply earnest souls who invest their own moral rambles with too vast significance. They are like those travellers who, instead of gaining breadth and mellowness from their journeyings, come home to discount, loudly

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and forever, all who have not seen Carcassonne. These are not peculiarly modern spirits; Montaigne said he envied them their self-content, but not their wisdom. And the most clamorous light-weight decriers of "decency" obviously belong to that deathless and always articulate class which Everett Dean Martin sees keeping one idea as a watch-dog to frighten all others away; the dog changes with the ages, but the keepers remain the same. The zeal of this group for self-expression is often so great as to recall the small boy who threw his brother in the well for the mere satisfaction of calling down to him minute instructions, triumphantly turning the windlass, and bringing him up in the bucket. But in spite of their ardour and industry these writers have never, in any age, been as startling and impressive as they would like to be. Zephaniah, in ancient Israel, speaks disparagingly of prophets who were "light persons". And at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the village of Ipswich, Massachusetts, Nathaniel Ward was meditating, evidently with a smile, "Hee that hath any well-faced phansy in his Crowne and doth not vent it now, fears the pride of his own heart will dub him dunce forever".

But thorough verbal floggings are as nothing to the "decent" compared with being judged too absolutely and on partial evidence by the really learned and philosophic moralists. It is not easy to understand why supposedly detached analysts, who on every page invoke the Great God Truth, should ever offer a distorted picture of "decency" or too omniscient cure-alls for the ills that it induced. They purport not to dramatize nor suppress evidence, but to record and weigh it, and to pronounce cool and deliberate judgments. Yet even they, in dealing with the "decent", seem to have peculiar difficulty in making the punishment fit the crime. There has literally been no end to the ponderous volumes enumerating the penalties inescapably imposed upon those guilty of "decency". Holinshed's *Chronicles* with its astounding record of petty misdemeanours in early England, punished by hanging, beheading, flogging, eye-gouging and the cutting off of hands, ears and fingers, is scarcely more impressive. Many who have noted at close range a host of those who came unscathed through the Age of Decency find the picture more than a little lurid. The "decent", for all their apparent simplicity, must be a bit inscrutable; they have, in fact, felt for years much like children who overhear their inmost thoughts and impulses too readily analyzed. Perhaps for the sake of historical accuracy they should utter aloud some of the protests they have long been murmuring among themselves.

The trouble is that, while all the theoretically "decent" creatures so woefully pictured for us possibly existed once, they demonstrate the code of "decency" breaking down rather than working. Surely one would not judge the quality of an automobile merely by its performance in the hands of drunken, half-witted or dare-devil drivers; demonstrators, to be of any value, must of necessity prove themselves deft, sober, intelligent, able to make the most of the machine in hand, and to meet emergencies with poise and judgment. Persons who could so reveal the workings of the code of "decency" were produced in the last generation in numbers that could not justly be thought negligible. But the portrayers of "decency" seem unanimously agreed to ignore them. This has made the reformers of the present age appear frequently guilty of a fallacy which has long been associated with anti-reformers—that of drawing conclusions from the study of disparate groups, of endeavouring to compare planes with spheres. It is not recognized that

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those who are so endlessly shown us making havoc of their lives in the last century would have been considered by a large number of their more thoughtful and discriminating contemporaries either slightly defective, amazingly stupid, or wilfully blind.

Even the most scholarly moralists have often given us strangely unbalanced pictures of life in the Age of Decency. Nothing could be more disturbing than finding those who would never dream of advancing the slightest unverified idea about modes and morals in Puka-Puka or Borrioboola-gha stating, with omniscient certainty, details about the inner life of the "decent" in the last century which, in the very nature of the case, God only knows. It seems rather a pity that ghosts are no longer as lively as they were in Shakespeare's day; a whole host of gracious, well-adjusted Victorian spirits might if they had the chance greatly enlighten their traducers.

In no one do absolute generalities prove more confounding than in Bertrand Russell, whom many of us first met as a mellow sceptic, teaching us that the philosophic mind is "tentative and precise" rather than "vague and cocksure", that "it is just as bad to be fraudulently optimistic in philosophy as in money matters", and that "final truth belongs to heaven, not to this world". Those who have known him in this mood cannot read his positive moral strictures without chanting to themselves a sort of philosophic Peter Piper—If he were as sceptical as he claims to be, he would be more sceptical than he is. For, as Santayana has pointed out, a really "profound scepticism is favourable to conventions, because it doubts that the criticism of conventions is any truer than they are".

Certainly many of Bertrand Russell's assertions about "decency" have been too positive to harmonize with his philosophy. Probably nothing is more disturbing to his thoroughly sceptical readers than the frequency with which he finds "nine out of ten" among the "decent" in this quandary or that; no phrase could be more startling from a philosopher and mathematician. Many of us associate it wholly with hectic itinerant evangelists who invariably, upon entering a new town, used to find "nine out of ten" inhabitants in dire peril of Hell. Even as children we challenged such definite figures and wondered whether they were gleaned from God's black books, or the Devil's register. Bertrand Russell's figures seem little better verified. Those who have carefully tabulated all the handicaps under which he believes nine out of ten of the "decent" suffered in the last century find themselves amazed that the portions of the earth where "decency" was the common code did not become practically depopulated. As every one knows, it was quite otherwise. And, as every one should also know, "nine out of ten" of the "decent" never went on record about their intimate personal lives. Here, indeed, lies the major difficulty with the modern case-system of studying morals. It seems incomprehensible that those who tend to stress strongly the psychological interpretation of life should not have perceived long ago that it is only the exhibitionists of one sort or another who tend to go into elaborate detail, even anonymously, about their deeper feelings. In the strict code of "decency" it isn't done. And despite the Freudians, this reserve is not always derived from the Puritans. Is it not possible that much decent reticence about the mysteries of life is directly traceable to the influence of those old English fairies whose passing Richard Corbet so poignantly laments?

> A tell-tale in their company
> They never could endure!
> And whoso kept not secretly

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Their mirth was punished sure;
It was a just and Christian deed
To pinch such black and blue.
Oh how the commonwealth doth want
Such Justices as you!

Even the most casual observers of life must frequently have noted the usual character of those who are willing to "tell all"; few mortals, in any age, have been fortunate enough to wholly escape those distressing persons who delight in talking too concretely about their personal problems. A widely experienced Victorian clergyman once declared that a lifetime of receiving confidences had taught him one lesson—"The more I hear about the absent sinner, the more I distrust the present saint". When the case-system of studying human conduct was in the pioneer stage, a young man working for his doctor's degree sent an elaborate questionnaire to a hundred mothers whose daughters he had taught in a country town. The only mother who filled out the blank in full and sent it back was a drab little woman whose daughter had become a prostitute. For weeks after mailing the record she ran about in unaccustomed ecstasy, telling with infinite ardour how she had, for the good of the world, traced all the steps on Letty's "road to ruin". And it has long been recognized that many contributors to modern symposia on domestic distress take such satisfaction in their published statements that they are unable to bear complete anonymity, but run about with magazine or huge tome under the arm, flipping it open at every opportunity with the triumphant cry, "Look how I handed it to James!" (or Helen, as the case may be). In practically all the modern frank revelations of discordant living many readers feel sure they can detect the familiar note which marks those who are *determined* to have trouble, and would have had it in ancient Babylon or Holy Rome.

This lopsidedness in modern emotional records perhaps makes a slight violation of the strict code of decency worth the cost, in order to clear up a few widely prevalent misconceptions. One of the least convincing characters in all this controversy is that hapless gentleman, appearing in every one of Bertrand Russell's moral discussions as though he had general significance, who, on account of his "decent upbringing", could never by hook or crook reconcile romance and respect. He may, of course, have lived somewhere once upon a time; even the dragons of legendry are said to bear some correspondence to reality. But he is certainly far from being typical. Apparently it would take quite an extensive research among the "decent" to uncover any one who has even glimpsed him; he tends to induce a quizzical rather than a reminiscent smile, and the consensus of "decent" opinion seems to be that his plight scarcely calls for a complete revolution of the moral order, but that he might well be addressed in the language of Aesop's Fox to the luckless Crow—"What you need is wits".

Indeed, this state of witlessness in which the "decent" of the last generation are constantly being pictured seems the most challengeable of all the charges brought against them. Anyone might fancy from reading the more radical moralists that *homo sapiens* did not antedate the radio. Of course the pet theory of the reformers, "the youngest are the wisest", is within the limits of some narrowly defined field of knowledge often true. But in the realm of morals, where, since the beginning of time, in every place and circumstance, all forms of human relations have been tested and retested, one feels on different ground. So that when the Bertrand Russells, with great solemnness, offer adultery as the latest remedy for marital disorder they

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seem scarcely more original and progressive than if they were prescribing human sacrifice as the atonement for sin, or incantation as the cure for disease. It must be remembered that the sum of mortal knowledge was not under mediaeval lock and key in the last generation, whatever the reformers may choose to believe. It is difficult to understand why careful analysts should not be aware that the thoroughly "decent" youth of the age just past grew up in peculiarly close touch with libraries and large family groups, so that between life and literature all those who were in the least educable gained quite a comprehensive knowledge of the problems of existence. Indeed, much might be said for insight gradually acquired from such skilled and seasoned masters over hasty, crass enlightenment by inept pedagogues or fervid parents. It is not credible that those who were familiar, as all intelligent young people were, with the lives of Lot, Rachel, Tamar and Samson, Achilles, Helen, Sappho and Guinevere, the Brownings, Agnes Copperfield and Becky Sharp should not have understood, approximately, what can happen in the realm of emotion. But the "decent" discovered nonchalance far in advance of the cigarette manufacturers, and refused to be unduly worried by their knowledge. Perhaps the supreme merit of the age was the casualness with which all phases of living were accepted, so that a large proportion of rational young persons were able to enter upon their adult lives with little morbidity, few false stresses and a vast deal of common sense.

In fact the major flaw in the modern portrayals of the "decent" seems to be the failure to recognize what an important part was played in their lives by this ancient virtue, common sense (now almost as discredited as alchemy). It had all the standing in the last generation that psychology has at the moment, and was more frequently invoked than the Hebrew God. It made the real reasons for conduct often a world away from the sinister, cowardly motives at present believed to underlie decency; it prevented the "decent" in real life from acquiring that topsyturvy Midas touch by which, in current legends, they turn everything to dross. Common sense, too, kept sentimentality in place, so that those trained in the earlier code find it difficult to accept, whole-heartedly, such writing of the day as merely expands that indubitably sentimental text from Whitman—"I dote on myself; there is that lot of me and all so luscious".

Common sense served also as an automatic check on the imagination which admittedly once played an important part in the lives of the young. At any moment the garden wall might turn into the ramparts of Bagdad, six weather-beaten boards rise to a jewel-studded palace, and a glowworm in a jelly glass become Aladdin's lamp. But all these imaginings did not lead, inevitably, in adult life either to the moronic visions of Channing Pollock's *The House Beautiful* or to bitter disillusionment when "living happily ever after" proved a mirage. For the makers of fairy-tales are probably the least gullible people in all the world; they know full well the stuff that dreams are made of, and how much one must bring to any high adventure. And so, when in later years an idealized lover proved at length a mere mortal, it was not the first time that some glamorous illusion had, without much wreckage, been cleared away; life was like that. Indeed, it often seems that the youth of the present age, with their rapid marital changes and feverish struggles for happiness, are the ones who, despite all their vaunted cynicism, believe too literally in the fairy prince and the end of the rainbow. Only this sanguine young genera-

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tion was able to give utter credence to the lyric hope of Mrs. Bertrand Russell, in her *The Right To Be Happy*, that with the revision of the old moral standards man's problems might "melt about him as the snows upon the mountain beneath the summer sun", and he could go forward along "the path of glorious destiny whose treading is abundant life and happiness". Surely putting salt upon the tail of happiness is no such easy trick. Common sense tended to induce a highly practical form of the philosophic mind.

The case for the "decent" could easily become as voluminous as that against them. But they must not protest too much; protesting at all is difficult for them. They have been marooned too long upon the steps of Robert Frost's *Black Cottage*, musing quietly—

Most of the change we think we see in life
Is due to truths being in and out of favour.

A year or two ago they expected to remain indefinitely out of the moral fray; they had been told too often and too caustically that all their side arms were rust-worn and pointless. They would never have ventured upon even these feints and passes if they had not, quite recently, discovered in unexpected quarters a hoard of weapons perfectly fitted to their hands. Bertrand Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness* is based on all the time-worn virtues of the "decent", scarcely refurbished. And from *The Fountain of Life* by Havelock Ellis and Aldous Huxley's pungent essays, *Music at Night*, with no more selectiveness than one would use for the same purpose in Holy Writ, there might be compiled a classic volume of "Meditations for the Decent". Possibly a few ardent souls who have gone full circle may now embrace a new synthetic "decency", and declare themselves again in the moral van. But the incurably "decent" are not inclined to assume too much from all this. They feel, however, that they can at least assume the right to existence. There should be some room for them in such a moral world as Santayana pictures, "round like the heavens", where "the directions which life can take are infinitely divergent".

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HELEN HULL: AN AUTHOR IN QUEST OF A HERO

by Roberts Tapley

Everyone will remember the passage in *Cakes and Ale* where Maugham indicated the process by which any industrious person of moderate gifts may become the "grand old man" of English letters. It was chiefly a matter of being nice to everyone, turning out a considerable mass of creditably written books, and waiting for previous incumbents to die. Helen Hull has taken exactly ten years to win recognition in America. She has had one particular advantage. The Book of the Month Club crowns at least one laureate every month, without reference to the state of health of previous incumbents. The selection of *Heat Lightning* has served the excellent purpose of drawing more general attention to an author who has been quietly demonstrating in a series of books that she is well equipped to voice the sentiments of a large group of intelligent readers. As for being nice to everybody—one suspects that has had very little to do with Miss Hull's advancement. Asked recently in an interview whether she thought it important for the young writer to live in New York "on account of the contacts", Miss Hull replied characteristically: "I have seen people rushing about so furiously in their attempts to meet critics, columnists, editors, and famous authors that they have no time left for writing". The quality of balance that is evident in this statement must be borne in mind presently when we come to consider in detail the considerable mass of very creditable books that Miss Hull has been able to turn out. For Miss Hull has brought just this quality of balance, moderation, precision, careful limitation to bear on one of the most engrossing questions of modern life—the question of love and marriage.

Shrewd, pointed, immediate, Miss Hull's novels spring from direct observation. Her purpose is not to evade, nor equivocate, nor confuse. She is simply not to be drawn into saying more than she means. She makes generalizations to fit the facts she has collected and the data she has to present. She declines to be drawn into sweeping pronunciamentos. She leaves applications to others, a privilege, be it said, of which certain commentators, now that she is important enough to be claimed as an oracle, are bound to avail themselves.

Already some hasty attempts have been made to show what Miss Hull's latest novel "proves". And it must be allowed that the author's habit of writing with constant reference to general ideas might naturally give rise to certain gratuitous inferences with regard to her point of view. But the method of the writer of fiction is not that of the statistician. For the moment any truth becomes susceptible of scientific demonstration, the discoverer or enunciator of that truth will be likely to set it forth in some form less tentative and ambiguous than a novel can possibly be. Did anyone ever write a novel to prove Gresham's law? The novelist of real substance finds much to be said upon several sides of his question, and this fact makes the

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most intelligent writers of fiction the most difficult to interpret.

Moreover, we do not read novels or plays for the theories they expound. *Othello* may prove that jealousy is a devastating emotion, if that point requires demonstration. But we read such masterpieces in order to see a passion or a character anatomized and displayed with a rich abundance of detail and the mental derivative belongs to the category of concrete rather than abstract knowledge, although if the passion is universal, if the character is typical, the resulting illumination may be of some general importance. The question of a novelist's message therefore reduces itself practically to the question of what types the novelist knows, what passions he has experienced, with what backgrounds he is familiar, how much he has understood.

Miss Hull's first novel, *Quest*,* appeared the same year as Mr. Lewis's *Babbitt* and Miss Cather's *One of Ours*, the year previous to *A Lost Lady*, two years after Miss Gale's *Lulu Bett*. I mention this fact because *Quest* belongs, like these other novels, to the background of the Middle West, with which Miss Hull was familiar from birth. It is not the pioneering or agricultural West, but a land already invaded with small-town people, all struggling to ape the refinement and luxury of the older civilizations, all hoping to gain or to hold a significant place in the ranks of the bourgeoisie—in short, people's minds are no longer turned towards the Pacific, but back to the Eastern seaboard.

An unforgettable character in this book is the heroine's mother. Mrs. Winthrop is a proud stupid woman who has been trained to absolute economic dependence; she has to beg her husband for every penny she requires. She is the type of the clinging vine that clings till it strangles. Moreover, she is woman on a pedestal. That is her compensation. If she were not superior to her husband, how could she, without violence to her self-respect, use him constantly and not make some tangible return? Mrs. Winthrop saves her self-respect by assuming that passion is a fault peculiar to men. To submit to her husband's importunities is a condescension, and, therefore, she expects to be paid; in fact she requires to be compensated every day for the favour she confers in merely continuing to live with such a clod. Mrs. Winthrop has a monopoly of the moral sense in the family. She knows all her husband's friends are drunken sots and her infallible instinct tells her that all the women he meets are no better than they should be. If he fails to support her in the state to which she has been accustomed it must be because he is spending his money on other women. From time to time she packs up and goes home to mother—until mother dies; then she has no place to go. And, as Mrs. Winthrop is incapable of self-support and her children refuse to be victimized any longer, she is forced to continue to lean rather heavily on the much abused Mr. Winthrop, still attempting to stiffen him by telling him he is no good.

Jean Winthrop, the daughter of this ignorant and ill-tempered woman, is a testimonial to our author's faith in an individual's power to survive the most adverse circumstances. Jean has really quite a normal youth, in spite of her parents. She goes visiting relatives, has a crush on a pretty teacher, acquires a girl chum, is snubbed by the social élite at school, develops a vein of nasty satirical humour, gets a job in the Ten Cent Store, reads poetry and goes canoeing with a

* The list of Miss Hull's published novels with their dates of publication is as follows: *Quest* (1922), *Labyrinth* (1923), *The Surry Family* (1925), *Islanders* (1927): Macmillan; *The Asking Price* (1930), and *Heat Lightning* (1932): Coward-McCann.

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boy friend, teaches school, devours Whitman, takes in everyone's comments on matrimony and love, cuts loose ultimately from her mother, leaves her father to die in a ditch, and sets out to wring culture from a neighbouring college. All of which, in a period of Lulu Betts and Lost Ladies was proof of a commendable hardness.

Here, then, is our Western prairie flower re-transplanted to the region from which she sprang. The next logical thing on the bill of fare is a sample of Eastern culture. Catherine Hammond, the heroine of *Labyrinth*, might be little Jean Winthrop's sister, some years older, married, and settled in New York. Accustomed to independence, she is nevertheless feminine and vulnerable to the softer emotions. She has married the man of her choice, her equal in education and intelligence. They have money enough to afford a couple of children and live in a comfortable apartment in New York and spend their summers in Maine. Catherine Hammond intends not to be a drag on her husband. She will not display jealousy, or forget that she can earn her living if there should be need. She will not sink into petty domestic absorptions, or clamour incessantly for new things, or cease to hear high winds blowing above the world. She is, in short, the new woman, a type that Miss Hull continues to admire and to value. She has courage and resource and definiteness of aim; she is not one who will merely chatter about her rights.

Meanwhile, Eastern culture had got to be rather stupendous and this Catherine Hammond is finding that wifehood and motherhood under modern conditions are cramping for a woman of her endowments. Washing diapers isn't enough, and the constant society of infants, however precious, has proved stultifying at last, involving stupid expeditions to public parks and long absences from her husband in the summer. Why not get a job? Catherine does get a job. She braves the opprobrious looks of her husband and her mother. She stifles the natural qualms she feels about leaving the children with strangers. She shoulders the double weight of responsibility for household and office routine. She endures the disquiet that comes from seeing a disgruntled mate making up to another woman. And what is the upshot? Charles Hammond gets stale, misses an expected promotion, gets an offer of a job that will take him away from New York, and so Catherine is forced to abandon her promising start. All of which is rather a blow to one's hopes about the new woman.

Is man—or are men—to blame? I have already spoken of Miss Hull's instinctive avoidance of sweeping generalizations. Certainly the man in this book cannot be pronounced guiltless however one may seek to extenuate or excuse. But more interesting, to my mind, than the outcome of the conflict, or the questions of justice involved, is the novel motive that induced Miss Hull's heroine to engage in her fruitless struggle. Catherine Hammond's trouble was not that the family income was inadequate, or that she had no proper part in its spending; it was just that she saw herself shut out from the world of professional life where her husband's interest lay, and denied any mental exercise that might have enabled her to keep pace with him. They had lost the companionableness of their earlier years. Catherine's effort failed, but the problem had been envisaged. It was: How, in a world that encourages specialization and so tends to exaggerate the opposition between the two sexes which arises from differences of function, can a husband and wife preserve that mental harmony which Miss Hull, with a soaring idealism, continues to hope for in marriage? Business and pro-

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fessional experience, in short, are here made to seem important for women, not in order that they may achieve an Amazonian self-sufficiency, but in order that they may continue to be fit companions for men.

It is not very long since the world was startled by a heroine of Bernard Shaw's who came down from her pedestal to engage in a conscious pursuit of the man she had picked to be the father of her child. But what are we to say of this creature in *Labyrinth* who abandons her children in order to engage in a post-matrimonial courtship of a man who has already fulfilled his biological destiny? *Man and Superman* said in effect that marriage is a trap into which men and women are lured by their sex instincts in order that the species may be perpetuated. Miss Hull seems to feel that the trap need not prove so confining if (*a*) the victims can manage to resist the appeal of the senses long enough to determine whether they are otherwise well mated and if (*b*) they contrive to enrich and strengthen their relationship by taking some pains subsequently to secure mental harmony.

The Surry Family is concerned with the initial choice. Marjy notes in her parents the same lack of agreement that troubles Jean Winthrop in *Quest*. She sees Paul Surry, her brother, captured in his first year at college by a woman who turns him at length into just a good paying investment. Marjy's first college beau is a romantic young Jewish radical, a complete outsider, sustained by visions of a bright revolutionary future but with nothing to offer her in the present except the uneasy delights of free love. Richard Savage, who later proposes to Marjy and whom she accepts, is the very privileged son of a college professor. "What a neat little fellow it was, polished shoes, carefully pressed gray suit, little blue tie to match his eyes. . . . Marjy didn't like his smile. It wasn't a wide friendly smile like his father's. His small mouth rose at the corners in a sharp V, as if his conceit pulled it."

Why does Marjy accept a man whom she hated instantly for his pompous manner and patronizing ways? It is true that her later impressions of him are more favourable, but she never appears to be carried away with him by the glamour of his position and prospects. One might almost believe that Marjy accepts Richard Savage in response to the eloquent plea made by Richard's mother!

> "When I saw him watching you [Mrs. Savage says] I thought—Marjy has courage and honesty. She could, *if she loved him*, build the world that he needs. It's not easy, I know. There are all the things you want yourself. I had them. Pride and ambition—great things. You have to turn them under—green manure, the gardeners call it—to enrich the soil in which human roots grow strong. Then in the end you have your pride again, for you see that it was in you that he grew to his whole stature. And your ambition is for him."

"If she loved him"—but plainly she doesn't, at least *not that way*, as heroines used to explain in the heyday of reticence. If her heart skips a beat when he asks her to marry him it is only because she is pleased that he plucked up courage and because a proposal of marriage in any case is a very serious business. A genteel heroine would have offered to be his sister; Marjy marries him. Why? In sheer lassitude, possibly. In a mood of recoil from marriages she has seen that were too blindly biological. In despair of finding among her contemporaries a husband to match her ideal.

But does Miss Hull approve of this marriage? Perhaps, in a way. Mrs. Gilbert, Oliver's mother in *The Asking Price*, Catherine's mother in *Heat Lightning* are women who have married not out of love but compassion. They are characters of much wisdom

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and tenderness, self-respecting and self-contained, perhaps just a little sad. They certainly shine by comparison with the Audreys and Wilmas and Lolas, that whole class of nagging females with which Miss Hull's pages are so abundantly scattered. *The Asking Price* is Miss Hull's most complete exposé from the husband's point of view of the marital chamber of horrors. As a record of careful, consistent, not unintelligent, plain and fancy hen-pecking, it seems to me unsurpassed; Audrey is Mrs. Winthrop and Mrs. Surry and Wilma Surry refined and magnified till we hardly know whether most to admire her high polish or her diabolical completeness in every detail. Yet Miss Hull, with a sneaking fidelity to an ideal that she seemed to have tossed to one side in *The Surry Family*, makes us feel that even Audrey's very objectionable tyranny is something that a more lordly male could easily have abated and that Audrey would actually have been happier if she had met her match.

A more lordly male—can that be the desideratum? All the men in these books are so shuffling, so ill-assured. Until, presto! we come at last to *Heat Lightning*. Here at last is a woman whose life has been vivified by old-fashioned romantic love! "*Heat Lightning* proves", one critic has remarked, "that the success of any marriage is in direct proportion to the intelligence of the wife." Nonsense! There is one very stupid woman (Emma) in this book whose stupidity is no obstacle to the success of her marriage. As for Grandmother Westover's intelligence, it is something born of her passionate love for her husband and of his devotion to her; it is something evoked by the grand passion of her life, fostered by it, coterminous with it, specific in its application and limited in its scope. Love in Grandmother Westover has released a spring which made action desirable for her and, being fortunately circumstanced, she never has wanted an outlet for her energies. Her quality is not wisdom or intelligence in any absolute sense; it is understanding and resource.

"Oh, Lora!" she cries deprecatingly, with reference to one of her children. "She may be my daughter, but she has no more idea than a rabbit about *living with other people.* All she *did* was to moan and wring her hands, and she got Tom to hating her."

Which says more than can ever be put in a neat aphorism.

Action! Action! Action! That is Grandmother Westover. Not to stand still and wring your hands. Just act. Act for the sensation, if it gets you nothing else. Action as an emotional catharsis. ("Mother never nurses her feelings. She always does something.") Action, sometimes, even without wisdom; witness the confusion wrought by Grandmother Westover's foolish act in tearing up her will; witness her blind, sentimental and ruinous devotion to the business her husband built up, just because it was his and theirs. As for consequences: "Most of our family haven't any imagination except for trouble, and they have too much of that".

Formerly Miss Hull has written much of unhappiness and frustration. A characteristic of her earlier books is that someone in them was always saying or thinking: "If only that doesn't happen!" "If only it doesn't rain!" "If only he doesn't get drunk!" "If only she doesn't find out!" Well, it always did happen. It rained. He got drunk. She found out. The moment you saw such a phrase, you were sure that the worst imaginable consequences would ensue, as though brought about by the act of imagining them. The best Mrs. Gilbert could do (in *The Asking Price*) was to view the human wreckage that surrounded her with a kind of humane detachment; with all

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her wisdom her sweetness and tender protectiveness, she could not remould anything to her heart's desire. And now here, at last, is a woman with imagination to create a habitable world. She has come out through a sort of door and has left behind her all those old unhappy images of frustration and doubt. She has found a true man—though not wholly a faithful man—and entered the portals of a deep and abiding love.

"Two things matter," observes one character in *Heat Lightning*. "One is acting so I don't feel ashamed of myself. The other—that's people. Loving them. *Loving them enough, now, so you feel alive.*"

The same thought occurred to Othello when he tried to explain how much Desdemona meant to him:

> But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
> Where *either I must live, or bear no life* . . .

A very curious fact remains to be noted. We have already observed the dilemma in which Marjy was placed in *The Surry Family*. She knew several men for whom she felt affection or sympathy, but none whom she could idolize. Where did Madame Westover discover her paragon? The strange fact is that the man whose love warmed and transfigured Madame Westover's life has been dead for years before the beginning of the novel in which Madame Westover figures. Can this be an accident, or a parable, or does it imply that Miss Hull has recoiled from the difficulty of depicting at closer range that very uncommon phenomenon, a desirable man?

I believe that Miss Hull's answer may be discovered in *Islanders*. This magnificent book, the key, I believe, to all of Miss Hull's other writing, is the epic and the elegy of a lost Eden. It is partly a history and partly an allegory. Moving here in a number of periods which she can know only indirectly, Miss Hull was able to shake off the trammels of pedestrian, realistic, immediately observable fact and to write with utter fidelity to her own soul.

Back in 1849, at the time of the California Gold Rush, all the Dacey men rode away from their farms and their women, and they never came back any more, or such of them as did come back were altered beyond recognition with their forces impaired, altered ideals, or with no ideals. And life was never the same again as it once had been. I will not attempt to rehearse all the different ways in which, in the course of that book, men keep riding away, leaving women at home on islands. One fights in the Civil War. One goes East to college. Several become deeply involved in financial speculation, in which their women's less educated but more realistic minds are unable to follow them. Ellen Dacey is shunted from one place to another, a traditional maiden aunt. From the early days when she ploughed and planted the lands of her truant father to her last years spent in the Long Island home of her prosperous, commuting nephew, she witnessed the whole sweep of social evolution in America from the simple agricultural era of home industries to the epoch of large-scale industry and high finance. As the complication of life increased, she saw men and wives growing apart, the men riding away, always riding away, leaving women at home on islands, pretty, futile islands at last, where they had to divert themselves with bridge teas and charity bazaars, lacking even the healthy distraction she once had derived from ploughing and planting the soil. "Don't let your husband do that to you," she tells her grand-niece. "Follow him to his work, if you must. Or don't marry a man like that, who wants you just for decoration."

Looking back to the days before she took

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leave of her lover underneath a sentinel oak, Ellen sees the Paradise of the pioneer epoch, or the era immediately after, when her mother and father were bound together by the force of a common endeavour, when a woman was more to a man than an ornament, when people were busy producing tangible goods with no time to develop neuroses, when lives were too rich and too full to leave room for refined discontents. By that sentinel oak stood one with a flaming sword shutting her out of Eden for ever. Concentration on nephews and nieces could relieve only for a time the pain of that inexorable exclusion; it was never wholly allayed. One night just before she died, they found Ellen stumbling and groping about her room in the dark in a state of semi-somnambulism; she was searching, searching, searching still at the last for a bank book, lost years before, in which was recorded the deposit of a sum of money which was all that had ever come back to her from her errant lover, her one tie with the older order that had been destroyed. It was not enough that she should have, as we say, sublimated her emotions, giving good advice to promising young relatives, even seeing that advice accepted. Men had taken from her her life; she had only one life. They had gone off and left her alone; they had shut her out, like most of the women she knew, from the blessed companionship that a woman might have with a man on a farm back in Michigan in the old days. There was no compensation for that.

No conjecture about what Miss Hull thinks of the men of our day, or of modern civilization, or of education is complete without *Islanders*. She is deeply distrustful of modern industry and finance. The modern world seems to her complex and puzzling, chaotic and undirected, unfavourable, above all, to good understanding between men and women. Some of her most likable characters have an almost naïve enthusiasm for education; education for women, especially, is much to the fore in her books. But it is not so much what the colleges teach that matters. What matters is that women, in so far as they can, should do the same things that men do, not get left stranded on pretty islands. Even with the best they can do, modern life will be difficult for them and their marriages will be successful only at a cost of constant effort and strain. And so when in *Heat Lightning* Miss Hull wished to show us a happy woman, she went back to that sentinel oak and disarmed the angel that was brandishing the flaming sword and led out Grandmother Westover from the lost Paradise. The old lady is not just anyone's grandmother, but a woman whose social surroundings were especially favourable to the harmonious development of the natural gifts in a man or a woman. Grandmother Westover had no inhibitions because she was one schooled to effective action, a woman whose knowledge and wisdom were equal to her needs, who was *wise in her generation*. Miss Hull is devoted to her but not blind about her. She sees her as a product of her own age and, therefore, in certain respects an anachronism. Her grand-daughter can learn from her but not imitate her. Even in her son's house next door the hand of time has wrought changes in one generation and new and strange customs prevail. Madame Westover has personal magic from a lost Paradise and therefore *Heat Lightning* affords us the pleasure for once of hearing ancestral voices prophesy things other than war. But let no one believe, or suppose that Miss Hull is affirming, that the golden age of the future can resemble that of the past.

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OSCAR WILDE BY THE STYX

by Hugh Kingsmill

Having occasion recently to visit the underworld, and wishing, if possible, to meet some of the famous talkers of the past, I asked an old gentleman of my acquaintance, who had known Oscar Wilde in the eighties, if he would be so kind as to give me a letter of introduction. "But certainly," he murmured, and going to his writing-table wrote, slowly and in a beautiful hand:

"My dear Oscar:—

Sir Hugh Kingsmill is bringing you these lines. He would be so charmed if you could spare him an hour of your eternity. You remember, don't you, Alaric Kingsmill? One of the Dorset Kingsmills, a cadet branch. Sir Hugh is, of course, the head of the family, and has a quite charming seat in Shropshire, which he can very seldom be persuaded to leave for the dreadful place which London has become since the late war.

Have you put the poppies of forgetfulness in your hair? Or do you still sometimes think of yours, always,

Cyril?"

My perplexed look, as he read this letter out, brought a gentle smile to his lips. "I want Oscar to be at his best for you," he murmured. "That must be my excuse for the freedom I have taken in burdening you with a baronetcy."

"Alaric Kingsmill is, I suppose, also—" I paused.

"Imaginary," the old gentleman concluded. He rose and, as we shook hands, sighed. "I wish I could accompany you," he said. "Oscar will be altogether charming."

Calling on Oscar Wilde by appointment, the day after my arrival in the underworld, I found him reclining in an easy chair on the verandah of a pavilion by one of the most beautiful reaches of the upper Styx. Near him stood a small table, on which were a few books, a box of cigarettes, and a bowl of asphodels. "Please do not move," I said, and he sank back with a relieved sigh.

"This is most charming of you, Sir Hugh. Cyril's note recalled some very pleasant hours with your—is it cousin?—Alaric."

"Poor Alaric!" I murmured. "But, of course, you knew—" Wilde's fine eyes clouded with sympathy. "Yes, I knew," he said.

There was a brief silence.

"And so you are from Shropshire, Sir Hugh. I have often regretted that I never lived in the country. That is one of the wonderful experiences which life withheld from me. It must be quite fascinating to raise shorthorn cattle."

"I know nothing about it; I'm afraid."

"Indeed? Then you will prefer to breed pigs?"

"No, I do not breed pigs."

"What admirable restraint! The economy of the true artist. I had no idea that the art of living in the country had been brought to such a point of perfection. But, please do not

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think me mistrustful, you are perhaps a secret landscape-gardener?"

"No, I never garden."

"You have indeed realized yourself with an astonishing completeness, Sir Hugh."

"It is very kind of you to put it like that, Mr. Wilde. I am afraid my neighbours look on me as rather an idle and useless person."

"An altogether idle and useless person, I hope, Sir Hugh. You must not be modest and pretend that you are one of those unsatisfactory persons who do nothing by halves. I am persuaded that you are a virtuoso of inaction, and are indeed consciously seeking to realize yourself in being, not in doing. And so I may confess to you, Sir Hugh, that Cyril's note quite frightened me. I was expecting someone who would insist on explaining to me how to make two blades of grass grow where one had grown before, which sounds such a congested thing to do, and really rather inhumane. It would always be painful to have to listen to such things. But because you are from Shropshire, it would have been doubly painful. For Shropshire is to me a sacred place. I would as soon hold speech with a merchant of timber, who should tell me of the gold that is paid to him in the market-place for the trees which his hirelings fell in the Forest of Arden, as hear of cattle or the price of corn from the lips of one who dwells in that western land which the genius of a great modern poet has converted into a symbol of the beauty that flowers for a moment and the pain that endures to the grave. The wise devotee, you do not need that I should tell it to you, is he who visits every shrine save the shrine of his adoration. I have never trod the meadows of Shropshire with light or tired feet; neither in her streams have I laved my hands. Her trees have not made a shade for me from the sun, nor her breezes with cooling fingers touched my brows. My loss, I do not question it, has been great. But my gain has been far greater. The Shropshire whither the poet leads me is marred by no trivial or ignoble memories, nor made dull by unimportant knowledge. And how wonderful it is! In its fields the sweet love of brothers is darkened by a sudden anger, and one lies still among the hay, and the other marvels at the blood that is scarlet upon his hand. Under the stars a lad calls to his beloved within the house, and she who would not hearken to his living voice lies against his dead breast, and questions him of the warm drops that fall upon her neck from his. For indeed in that land the young are amorous of Death, and know that he is more merciful than Life, and are fain of him that he may hide them in the hollow earth, so that none may make a mock of them when the loveliness is gone from their limbs, nor shame them with pity for the brightness that has faded from their hair."

Wilde's cigarette had gone out. He lit another, and watched the smoke rising in the still air.

"We have had nothing like *A Shropshire Lad* in the last thirty years," I said. "But, of course, you know that, Mr. Wilde. I understand that you get all the latest books here, and, I am afraid, will have found little in our recent literature to appeal to a devotee of beauty like yourself."

"Ah! little indeed, Sir Hugh. But it would be false modesty on my part to pretend that the blame for this deplorable state of things is not very largely mine. And modesty is always a mistake, even when it is false. To attempt anything in life is to make quite certain that the opposite will occur. With a chain of honeyed words I bound that tedious and uncomely Andromeda, the English public, and called the shining dragon of Beauty

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from his ebony cave, to stretch himself beside her, that in terror of his strength she might find courage, and in desire of his loveliness be made whole. But coarse hands snatched my lyre, and broke it, and stripped the raiment from my back, and put a shameful dress upon me, and I was buffeted upon the lips, and my mouth was stopped with dust."

He paused, and there were tears in his eyes. To give him time to compose himself, I took out my pipe and filled it, an action which served to divert his thoughts, for as he stretched out his hand for a fresh cigarette he gazed at my pipe in mild but unmistakable distress.

"And while they did these things to me," he resumed, in his ordinary tone, "there were others who crowded round the foolish woman, and loosed the chains from her shapeless limbs, and brought her in triumph back to Bayswater, where they were, of course, richly rewarded for the disservice which they had done her."

He paused again, and I turned over in my mind a suitable question to elicit his opinion of Shaw and Wells, and the other writers who had succeeded him in the public favour. But I was not required to exercise my tact.

"Shaw", he continued "had intelligence, and Wells had imagination, and Galsworthy had form, and Chesterton had wit. These were grave disadvantages. But they were altogether outweighed by the happy chance that none of them was Oscar Wilde. And of this chance they made the most. Ah! they are wise who save men from the solitude of their own souls. In my folly I laid upon the individual the terrible task of perfecting himself. In their wisdom Shaw and Wells invited the individual to the pleasant recreation of perfecting everyone else. Because I exalted the importance of personality, men hated me. Because Shaw and Wells derided the importance of personality, they were idolized. It is always so. There are always crosses for the creators, and shrines for the iconoclasts."

"But, Mr. Wilde, both Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells claim to be constructive as well as destructive."

"I know it. There seem to be absolutely no lengths to which those two men will not go."

"May I ask which of them you disapprove of more?"

"Wells, undoubtedly. Or Shaw. It is so difficult to say. Shaw promises humanity a millennium which shall be free from passion. Wells promises humanity a millennium which shall be free from the consequences of passion. Shaw is reasonable and repulsive, and bids men realize themselves through parsnips, and the dwellers in his Utopia cast no shadows because they have no bodies. Wells is unreasonable and ridiculous, and really seems to believe that if man will but travel far enough in time, or fast enough in space, he shall escape in his body from the shadow which his body casts. The Utopias of Mr. Wells are garden-city Agapemones, where dreadful persons practise promiscuity as the most important of civic virtues, and he has planted his Utopias in space as in time, and has vulgarized the universe no less than the future, promising the stars to man for a refuge from the self which he must bear with him, though his wings of canvas soar above Orion, and his chariots of aluminium carry him beyond the Milky Way."

"You mentioned Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Chesterton with Shaw and Wells, I think."

"Ah! Galsworthy! What a mind! How simple was his formula of success and how absolutely original! By accusing the upper middle-class of being aristocrats, he immediately out-distanced every possible competitor for the favour of the most important sec-

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tion of the reading public. Very earnestly, but with perfect breeding, he begged the most timid, the most sentimental, and the most unreal division of our society to bridle their arrogance, and lay their cynicism aside, and make sober their raiment, and beat the hooves of their trampling steeds into flat-irons for their poorer brethren. They were, of course, absolutely enchanted, and promised to do exactly what he had asked of them, and they foreswore curious sins which they had never committed, and repented of mad follies which they could not even conceive."

"I wonder what you will have to say of Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Wilde. As I listen to you I feel more strongly than ever an affinity between Mr. Chesterton and yourself. In temperament, I mean, of course, not in genius. In fact, if I may borrow a phrase much staled by numerous applications, Mr. Chesterton seems to me to have made you safe for democracy."

"Say rather, that he made himself safe for democracy, Sir Hugh. Because he resembled me, he repudiated me, and used my mode of speech to make a mock of my message. Because I uttered paradoxes as though they were platitudes, that men might draw near without trembling to the truth which is hidden in contradiction, Chesterton uttered platitudes as though they were paradoxes, and persuaded men that in order to be original it was only necessary to be obvious. From the high and horrible tower of the popular press, he cried out in a great voice that Dickens was readable, and that Browning was robust, and that the Bible was true, and that George Moore was false. He praised beer with defiance for its taste, as though it were customary to adore it for its colour, and defended respectability with his back against an invisible wall, and seemed to be encircled by outraged Mohammedans when he pleaded for monogamy. To the black-suited dwellers in Suburbia he wished godspeed each morning and a high heart for the perils of the way; and bade their wives be comforted in the mystic recurrence of their degrading household occupations, and exalt themselves in the changeless pattern of their tedious days."

There was a long silence.

"Well, Mr. Wilde," I said, getting up, "I must not trouble you longer. I needn't say how much I have enjoyed hearing you talk."

Wilde rose, and extended his hand.

"Your pleasure has been no greater than mine, Sir Hugh. I have seldom met so brilliant a listener."

His smile and attitude recalled Lord Henry Wotton in *Dorian Gray*. Remembering the quick epigrams in which Lord Henry sometimes indulged, I said:

"And our post-war writers, Mr. Wilde? May I ask what you think of James Joyce?"

"Rabelais sea-sick."

"And Lytton Strachey?"

"A rhetorician without lungs."

"And D. H. Lawrence?"

"A satyr from the hooves down."

"?"

"I am thinking of that absurd book—I forget its name—the one in which Lawrence masquerades as a frail game-keeper, against whom no self-respecting poacher could possibly raise his hand, save in kindness."

"Lady Chatterley's Lover."

"Ah, yes! And there is a baronet husband who is paralyzed, and his lady runs away with the keeper, in order to illustrate the great Darwinian principle of the survival of the least unfit."

He extended his hand again, murmuring:

"Any time when you are passing, Sir Hugh. I shall always be so charmed."

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MARLOWE, THE MUSES' DARLING

by Charles Norman

On the 30th day of May, 1593, in a room of a tavern in Deptford, across the Thames from London, there were assembled four men who, after a day of drinking, "were in quiet sort together". Before the light faded, and the land grew dark, they walked in the garden belonging to the house, and then returned to the room where they "together and in company supped".

An hour or so later, one of the four was stretched out with a deep dagger wound over his right eye. Marlowe, "the Muses' darling", lay dead in a tavern in the heyday of his career. For more than three hundred years, until Professor Hotson's discovery in 1925 of the coroner's inquest and Queen Elizabeth's pardon, no credible explanation of the homicide was to be had, and even the name of the slayer was in doubt. One of the Puritan pamphleteers had called him "a bawdy serving man, a rival of his in his lewd love"; and the inference that Marlowe had fought a duel to the death over a woman—in a tavern—has filled many a writer's mind with delight, and many a book with nonsense.

The publication of a library edition of Marlowe,* prefaced by a new and comprehensive *Life* of the dramatist, reminds us to what degree Marlowe's life was itself a drama which closed on a bitter and tragic note, leaving mysteries which only the researches of recent years have in part cleared up, and doubts about certain activities of the poet which may never receive plausible explanation. The promise contained in the announcement of such editors of the individual volumes as Professor Tucker Brooke, author of the *Life*, Miss U. M. Ellis-Fermor, H. S. Bennett, H. B. Charlton, F. S. Boas, and L. C. Martin has been generously fulfilled.

The best edition of Marlowe's work, and the most satisfactory to date, has been that published in 1910 by Professor Brooke. Never has a poet fared better at the hands of an editor than Marlowe fared in that instance. So satisfying were the texts, due to a skilful collation of the earliest Quartos, and the succinct notes so full of informative matter, that it is questionable indeed whether that edition ever will be entirely supplanted.

The present edition makes a bid for the patronage of "the less expert reader" by use of a modernized text, though the purpose might have been served by an explanation of the use of "i" for "j" and "v" for "u" in the old spelling, thereby retaining the Elizabethan flavour of the words. Professor Brooke starts the series well by his astute array of facts pertaining to the poet's life, and by his superb editing of Marlowe's earliest extant play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage,* which together make up the initial volume.

Marlowe was born on February 6, 1564, two months before Shakespeare. His father belonged to the shoemaker's guild of Canterbury. He attended the King's School in

* *The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe.* General Editor, R. H. Case. New York: Dial Press; London: Methuen. 1930-1932.

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that city for about two years after his fifteenth birthday, and was then admitted to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on a scholarship. His full residence there of six years indicates that his behaviour was satisfactory to the University authorities, and that he was regarded as a candidate for holy orders. The precise reason for his change of heart is not known, but the fact that *Dido* and his translations from Ovid and Lucan were written while he was a student at the University would seem to indicate that the growing knowledge of his poetic gift had wrought a gradual change in his outlook. London, the writers' city, beckoned.

He took his Bachelor's degree in 1584, and his Master of Arts in 1587. Earlier in the latter year he seems to have been engaged in a singular undertaking, and was absent from the University part of the time. A Privy Council document suggests the nature of his activity:

> Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley was determined to have gone beyond the seas to Reames and there to remain, their Lordships thought good to certify that he had no such intent, but that in all his actions he had behaved himself orderly and discreetly, whereby he had done her Majesty good service and deserved to be rewarded for his faithful dealing. Their Lordships' request was that the rumor thereof should be allayed by all possible means, and that he should be furthered in the degree he was to take this next Commencement: because it was not her Majesty's pleasure that any one employed as he had been in matters touching the benefit of his country should be defamed by those who are ignorant in th' affairs he went about.

This document is a letter to the Cambridge authorities who had looked upon Marlowe's absence and activities with distrust, and were now reluctant to give him his M.A. The reference to Rheims becomes clear when we learn that it was the center of Catholic plots against Elizabeth, and evidently someone had started the rumour that Marlowe's leanings were papist. The letter proved effective, and he got his degree at the following commencement.

Professor Brooke, while discounting the strong language used by their Lordships of the Privy Council, thinks that "th' affairs he went about" probably took Marlowe out of the country for several months. He rejects the inference of spy work, which some authorities accept, and offers no explanation of the nature of the poet's business in the Low Countries or France save that it was "of a moderately confidential character".

Despite Professor Brooke's scepticism as to its extent, this quasi-political turn to Marlowe's activities must be borne in mind, and no account of the poet's life and the tragedy of his death at Deptford, six years later—"the great reckoning in a little room", as Shakespeare termed it—can be complete without an appraisal of its ramifications.

The age he lived in was one of enterprise and adventure full of hazard. West of England the world was what a man of his temperament imagined it to be. But Marlowe was aware that strenuous living and fabulous pursuits, for honour and for gold, were not all; that the mind also had its exciting and soul-satisfying experiences. The man who could write:

> Our soules, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous Architecture of the world:
> And measure every wandring plannets course,
> Still climing after knowledge infinite,
> And alwaies mooving as the restles Spheares,
> Wils us to weare our selves and never rest—

stands close to our time. He had pride in knowledge, and comprehension of the world's wonders which absolute knowledge could never wholly dispel; and he knew despair because the search can have no end.

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Dido had disclosed his ability to portray a woman in an emotional rôle, and effectively answers the criticism that he was unable to delineate female character successfully. The play reveals the extent of his learning, his frequent borrowings from Virgil, and introduces sensuous blank verse as a medium for the stage. It is full of images which he afterwards elaborated and repeated, notably in *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus*.

But it remained for something less than a love story and something more than a tale of action to enable him to set his mark indelibly on the London scene. The Prologue to *Tamburlaine* announced the arrival of a new type of stage entertainment:

From jigging veins of riming mother wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.

The time was propitious for a turbulent war drama. There had been national anxiety over a breach with France in the Stafford plot to kill the Queen, in which the French ambassador was accused of complicity. Drake had sacked several cities on the coast of Spain and held up the advance of the Spanish Armada upon England for a year. Men were being drafted for the national defense, and talk of war set the tempo of the time.

The play took London by storm. What a blast did Marlowe let forth to make Puritans and pedants prick up their ears!

Come, let us march against the powers of heaven,
And set black streamers in the firmament,
To signify the slaughter of the gods.

And the melody that has no equal in English verse:

Your majesty shall shortly have your wish,
And ride in triumph through Persepolis.

And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
Is it not brave to be a king, Techelles?
Usumcasane and Theridamas,
Is it not passing brave to be a king,
And ride in triumph through Persepolis?

O, my lord, 'tis sweet and full of pomp!

To be a king is half to be a god.

A god is not so glorious as a king:
I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven,
Cannot compare with kingly joys in earth;
To wear a crown enchas'd with pearl and gold,
Whose virtues carry with it life and death;
To ask, and have, command and be obeyed;
When looks breed love, with looks to gain the prize,
Such power attractive shines in princes' eyes.

The theatre-going Londoners, never a docile lot, thundered their cheers hearing the "high astounding terms" of the shepherd warrior who became a king:

I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove,
And yet a shepherd by my parentage.

I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about,
And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere
Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.

The god of war resigns his room to me,
Meaning to make me general of the world;
Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne.

Indeed, so great was the reception accorded the play, that a second part was commissioned, and Marlowe, famous at twenty-four, outdid himself in penning it. Part I had chronicled the bloody conquests of Tamburlaine in language that was both bombastic and awe-inspiring, replete with realistic descriptions of the horrors of war, and had developed the love of the Scythian scourge for

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Zenocrate. In Part II, the stirring martial tempo is maintained, but a new note is introduced, the note of pity and despair for man's frailty when nature is the adversary. Zenocrate, now the mother of three grown sons, is dying, and Tamburlaine, the protagonist of Marlowe's mind, fierce and tender by turns, delivers the elegy of undying love:

Black is the beauty of the brightest day;
The golden ball of heaven's eternal fire,
That danc'd with glory on the silver waves,
Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams,
And all with faintness and for foul disgrace,
He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,
Ready to darken earth with endless night.
Zenocrate, that gave him light and life,
Whose eyes shot fire from their ivory bowers,
And tempered every soul with lively heat,
Now by the malice of the angry skies,
Whose jealousy admits no second mate,
Draws in the comfort of her latest breath,
All dazzled with the hellish mists of death.
Now walk the angels on the walls of heaven,
As sentinels to warn th' immortal souls
To entertain divine Zenocrate:
Apollo, Cynthia, and the ceaseless lamps
That gently look'd upon this loathsome earth,
Shine downwards now no more, but deck the heavens
To entertain divine Zenocrate:
The crystal springs, whose taste illuminates
Refined eyes with an eternal sight,
Like tried silver runs through Paradise
To entertain divine Zenocrate:
The cherubins and holy seraphins,
That sing and play before the King of Kings,
Use all their voices and their instruments
To entertain divine Zenocrate:
And in this sweet and curious harmony,
The god that tunes this music to our souls
Holds out his hand in highest majesty
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

Good as this was, better was to follow. Zenocrate, full of humility before her lord, reiterates her love and calls for music.

Tamburlaine: Proud fury and intolerable fit,
That dares torment the body of my love,
And scourge the scourge of the immortal God!
Now are those spheres, where Cupid used to sit,
Wounding the world with wonder and with love,
Sadly supplied with pale and ghastly death,
Whose darts do pierce the centre of my soul.
Her sacred beauty hath enchanted heaven,
And had she liv'd before the siege of Troy,
Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms,
And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,
Had not been nam'd in Homer's Iliads,
Her name had been in every line he wrote;
Or had those wanton poets, for whose birth
Old Rome was proud, but gazed a while on her,
Nor Lesbia nor Corinna had been nam'd.
Zenocrate had been the argument
Of every epigram or elegy.
(The music sounds and she dies)
What, is she dead? Techelles, draw thy sword,
And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain,
And we descend into th' infernal vaults,
To hale the fatal Sisters by the hair,
And throw them in the triple moat of hell,
For taking hence my fair Zenocrate.
Casane and Theridamas, to arms!
Raise cavalieros higher than the clouds,
And with the cannon break the frame of heaven;
Batter the shining palace of the sun,
And shiver all the starry firmament,
For amorous Jove hath snatched my love from hence,
Meaning to make her stately queen of heaven.

At the end, Tamburlaine is himself confronted by the ugly spectre of death:

See, where my slave, the ugly monster death,
Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear,
Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart.

Reviewing the long line of his dazzling victories, he dies regretting to leave territories as yet unconquered. In English blank verse, the vigour of "Marlowe's mighty line" still pulses, the music of his great work still rings out, for wonder and delight, like a

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carillon from the golden era over which Elizabeth was queen.

Compared with some of his contemporaries, Marlowe was not a prolific writer. What is significant about most of his work is the finish it discloses. This can only mean that, unlike Greene, Nashe, Chettle and others who lived in proverbial poverty, Marlowe had leisure and few material wants. It is safe to assume that he was employed by some nobleman for whose players he wrote, and whom he served in the capacity of secretary. "And 'tis a pretty toy to be a poet", he had written; renown was his, and in men's minds he was no longer the person of mysterious doings who needed official influence to secure his degree. He seems to have moved in excellent company, numbering among his friends and intimates Sir Walter Raleigh, Thomas Walsingham, George Chapman, Mathew Roydon, Thomas Hariot, a mathematician and explorer, and "the young publisher-gentleman", Edward Blunt, who afterwards dedicated the unfinished *Hero and Leander* to Walsingham in words of sublime affection for the dramatist.

The impression that has come down to us of Marlowe at this period is of a proud, rash, argumentative man. I see him sniffing contemptuously in a bookseller's stall, bending over a printed sheet or a book intended for gulls. In a tavern, wine washing his belly, and prompted by a score of rousy fellows, he gave his wit the free rein which Puritans so stridently denounced after his death. He seems to have been devoid of fear, both as a man and as a writer. His plays are full of utterances both daring and dangerous for his time, and his alleged conversations were fraught with danger to himself and his associates. The rumour of atheism which pursued him while he lived did not abate after his death.

The final phase of the poet's life and activities epitomizes the stirring times in which he played his part. In the spring of 1593, anti-alien feeling was running high in the city of London. The rising cost of living and the presence of a considerable number of thrifty Belgians, Flemings and Frenchmen who flourished undaunted in the hard times, aggravated the situation. There were some skirmishes between the two factions, and the authorities became apprehensive. On May 11th, the Privy Council, fearful of international complications, authorized its agents to "search in any of the chambers, studies, chests, or other like places for all manner of writings or papers that may give you light for the discovery of the libellers".

In pursuance with this order, and probably on information lodged with the Council, on the very next day Thomas Kyd, the celebrated author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, was arrested and his chambers searched. Suspected of being mixed up in the writing of a play which was meant to take advantage of the tense situation, Kyd was held upon the discovery among his papers of a three-page religious document on which a greffier wrote:

> 12 May 1593
> vile hereticall Conceiptes
> denyinge the deity of Jhesus
> Christ our Saviour fownd
> emongest the papers of thos
> kydd prisoner

On the protest of the prisoner, the following words were added:

> which he affirmethe that he
> had from Marlowe.

—and the drama swells to its tragic climax.

On May 18th, the dreaded Star Chamber issued a warrant to Henry Maunder "to repair to the house of Mr. Tho. Walsingham in Kent, or to any place where he shall under-

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stand Christofer Marlow to be remaining, and by virtue thereof to apprehend and bring him to the Court in his company". It ended with the laconic words: "And in case of need to require aid."Two days later, on the 20th, a minute of the Council announces that: "This day Christofer Marley of London, gentleman, being sent for by warrant from their Lordships, hath entered his appearance accordingly for his indemnity therein; and is commanded to give his daily attendance on their Lordships, until he shall be licensed to the contrary".

Apparently he was able to satisfy their Lordships that his being at large would not endanger the realm, and he was released on parole. Had he been imprisoned, how different the story of his life and accomplishment might have been; for ten days later he was dead at the age of twenty-nine.

Writing seven years after the tragedy, William Vaughan has this account in his *Golden Grove*:

> Christopher Marlow by profession a playmaker, who, as it is reported, about 7. yeeres a-goe wrote a booke against the Trinitie: but see the effects of Gods justice; it so hapned, that at Detford, a little village about three miles distant from London, as he meant to stab with his ponyard one named Ingram, that had invited him thither to a feast, and was then playing at tables, he quickly perceiving it, so avoided the thrust, that withall drawing out his dagger for his defence, hee stabd this Marlow into the eye, in such sort, that his braines comming out at the daggers point, hee shortlie after dyed. Thus did God, the true executioner of divine justice, worke the ende of impious Atheists.

What Ingram's surname was, and what the quarrel, did not concern the Puritan Vaughan, who seized on the moral and pointed it out. Nor did he trouble himself with the fact that there had been two earthly witnesses besides God's angels. One was an out-and-out shady fellow. The other was a spy. What were they doing there? It is unlikely that we shall ever know. Nevertheless, an appraisal of their worth is possible from the things that have been uncovered.

Ingram Frizer, the slayer, appears to have been in the service of Thomas Walsingham, and therefore acquainted with Marlowe. He seems not to have been the best character to claim consideration in a plea of self-defense, yet his plea was recognized, and the pardon for which he sued was granted.

Nicholas Skeres, one of the witnesses, was designated as early as 1585 as one of a number of "Masterless men and cutpurses whose practice is to rob gentlemen's chambers and artificers' shops in and about London". After Marlowe's death he appears in the records as working frauds in concert with Ingram Frizer. We may safely assume that Skeres was Frizer's friend, and not Marlowe's.

Robert Poley, the other witness, was an adventurer and spy, a gallant of sorts, who ran off with another man's wife. He seems to have been at his best in a game of plot and counterplot, and was in the employ of Secretary Walsingham (to whom Thomas Walsingham was related) to spy on the Catholics with whom he had taken service. He is down on the records with the statement that, "I will swear and forswear myself rather than I will accuse myself to do me any harm", and like Skeres, had spent no little time in prison. As Professor Brooke puts it, "the poet had certainly been in far better company at the atheist's club", whose presiding genius was Sir Walter Raleigh.

It is with this precious trio that we find Marlowe on the 30th of May, spending unbeknownst to himself, the last day of his life. The official account of the doings on that day is contained in the coroner's inquisition. In the presence of William Danby, coroner of

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the Queen's household, sixteen men who comprised a jury found

. . . upon view of the body of Christopher Morley there lying dead & slain . . . that when a certain Ingram ffrysar, late of London, Gentleman, and the aforesaid Christopher Morley and one Nicholas Skeres, late of London, Gentleman, and Robert Poley of London aforesaid, Gentleman, on the thirtieth day of May . . . at Detford Strand . . . about the tenth hour before noon of the same day, met together in a room in the house of a certain Eleanor Bull, widow; & there passed the time together & dined & after dinner were in quiet sort together there & walked in the garden belonging to the said house until the sixth hour after noon of the same day & then returned from the said garden to the room aforesaid & there together and in company supped; & after supper the said Ingram & Christopher Morley were in speech & uttered one to the other divers malicious words for the reason that they could not be at one nor agree about the payment of the sum of pence, that is, *le recknynge,* there; & the said Christopher Morley then lying upon a bed in the room where they supped, & moved with anger against the said Ingram ffrysar upon the words as aforesaid spoken between them. . . . And the said Ingram then & there sitting in the room aforesaid with his back towards the bed . . . & with the front part of his body towards the table & the aforesaid Nicholas Skeres & Robert Poley sitting on either side of the said Ingram in such a manner that the same Ingram ffrysar in no wise could take flight: it so befell that the said Christopher Morley on a sudden & of his malice towards the said Ingram aforethought, then & there maliciously drew the dagger of the said Ingram which was at his back, and with the same dagger the said Christopher Morley then & there maliciously gave the aforesaid Ingram two wounds on his head . . . whereupon the said Ingram, in fear of being slain, & sitting in the manner aforesaid . . . in his own defense & for the saving of his life, then & there struggled with the said Christopher Morley to get back from him his dagger aforesaid; in which affray the same Ingram could not get away from the said Christopher Morley; and so it befell in that affray that the said Ingram, in defense of his life, with the dagger aforesaid of the value of 12*d.* gave the said Christopher then & there a mortal wound over his right eye . . . of which mortal wound the aforesaid Christopher Morley then & there instantly died; And so the Jurors aforesaid say upon their oath. . . .

"A most important first consideration", Professor Hotson wrote when he published the document cited above, "is that there were two witnesses to the killing, evidently friends of Marlowe and Frizer, who had been feasting with them. The finding of 'homicide in self-defense' in the case is based upon an examination of Marlowe's body, of the dagger-wounds on Frizer's head, of the dagger itself, and upon the testimony of the two eye-witnesses, Poley and Skeres.

"Two courses are open to us: (*a*) to believe as true the story of Marlowe's attack on Frizer from behind, corroborated in so far as it is by the wounds on Frizer's head, which wounds must have been inflicted *before* Marlowe received his death-blow; or (*b*) to suppose that Frizer, Poley, and Skeres after the slaying, and in order to save Frizer's life on a plea of self-defense, concocted a lying account of Marlowe's behaviour, to which they swore at the inquest, and with which they deceived the jury".

Professor Hotson then decides in favour of Frizer's story of self-defense. Immediately a storm of scepticism set the scholars agog. Marlowe slain in a dispute over the bill? There were two others present who had also eaten and drunk and whose say in the matter was as great as either Frizer's or Marlowe's. If Frizer found it impossible to get away from Marlowe's sudden attack from behind, Marlowe must have found it extremely difficult to get in an effective blow with the dagger, as he is then described as lying down. And, in the meantime, what were Skeres and Poley doing? Why was their testimony left out? A host of other

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questions came easily to mind, and in the end there was uncertainty and disbelief.

It was easier, considering the character of the three men, which is enough to give one pause, and bearing in mind the many omissions of which the coroner's document is guilty, to believe that Marlowe was killed in a quarrel over other matters, and, with the crime committed, the survivors agreed to lie in order to save Frizer's life, and possibly their own as well.

Professor Brooke, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, accepts the findings of the coroner's jury, thereby siding with Hotson, Boas and other authorities. As a humanly plausible story, Frizer's defense is indeed well nigh unshakable.

Nevertheless, the scepticism grew in certain quarters, until, casting about for a new motive, Dr. Tannenbaum* developed the theory of assassination, marshalled an impressive array of evidence bordering on the sensational, and named a man as responsible for instigating the murder. Briefly, his findings were based on the following items:

He held that the starting point of the tragedy was the arrest of Kyd. Kyd, while confined, had been subjected to torture. With Marlowe's erstwhile roommate become loquacious, a great hue and cry seems to have been raised against the author of *Tamburlaine* in connection with his rumoured atheism. The first fruit of this was the Baines "libel". This remarkable paper, submitted by an informer in the employ of the Privy Council, contained among other morsels the following serious charges:

> He [Marlowe] affirmeth that Moses was but a Jugler, & that one Heriots [Hariot] being Sir W Raleighs man Can do more than he. . . . That the first beginning of Religionn was only to keep men in awe. . . . That he had as good Right to Coine as the Queen of England, and that he was acquainted with one poole [?Poley] a prisoner in Newgate who hath great Skill in mixture of mettals and having learned some things of him he ment through the help of a Cuninge stamp maker to Coin french Crownes pistolets and English shillings. . . . That one Ric Cholmley hath Confessed that he was perswaded by Marloes Reasons to become an *Atheist.*

It ended with the threatening diatribe:

> These things shall by good & honest witnes be aproved to be his opinions and Comon Speeches and that this Marlow doth not only hould them himself but almost into every Company he Cometh he perswades men to *Atheism* willing them not to be afeard of bugbearers and hobgoblins . . . I think all men in Cristianity ought to indevor that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped . . . he hath quoted a number of Contrarieties oute of the Scripture which he hath given to some great men who in Convenient time shal be named. . . .

If murder, here was the cue. To whom might it have proved of use?

Dr. Tannenbaum names Raleigh. Raleigh, heroic in his exploits, poet and courtier, was undoubtedly a Machiavellian. Had he deemed it expedient to get a man out of the way in order to save himself, he would not have lost much time. There were plenty of dark passages in London, and daggers under cloaks, and foul drains to throw the body in, and hirelings to do the deed. He had himself expressed, in a poem of great strength and bitterness—a poem that belongs to the year 1593—the thought that homicide may be justifiable:

> Because to give the lie,
> deserves no lesse than stabbing.

He is known to have been the central figure of a group of free-thinkers. Baines had named Hariot as his associate, and Cholmley as one who had been converted to

* The Assassination of Marlowe, 1928.

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atheism by Marlowe. Cholmley is known to have said that "Marlowe is able to shewe more sounde reasons for Atheisme than any devine in England is able to geue to prove devinitie & that Marloe . . . hath read the Atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh & others".

Many fingers seemed to be pointing at the renowned adventurer. It is presumable that Raleigh knew of Kyd's arrest, the warrant issued for Marlowe's arrest, Marlowe's parole, and Baines's accusations. The net would have seemed to be closing around him, and Marlowe, had he lived to be questioned, might have proved an unlucky witness.

* * *

The death of Marlowe was followed by an outburst of Puritan wrath against the man and his work. No vile epithet was too vile for his detractors to use: "Marlin, by profession a scholar, brought up from his youth in the University of Cambridge, but by practise a playmaker, and a Poet of scurrility, who by giving too large a swing to his own wit . . . fell to that outrage and extremity that he denied God. . . . But see what a hook the Lord put in the nostrils of this barking dog. . . ." This was the burden of their invective. In 1628, John Earle could say: "Sitting in a bawdy-house, he writes God's judgment. He ends at last in some obscure painted cloth, to which himself made the verses, and his life, like a can too full, spills upon the bench. He leaves twenty shillings on the score, which my hostess loses".

The Puritans saw in the death of the poet only the terrible justice of heaven appropriately meted out, and added fuel to the fiery legend that has persisted to this day of Marlowe as the very archetype of the Italianate Elizabethan—hot-blooded, lusty and bellicose, wearing pride like a feather in his hat.

But there must have been something else, a charm confined not only to his genius, that made other men speak of his end with pathos, and of his accomplishments as if they were touched with glory. Nobly, and with great kindness, the poets mourned his end. Item: Peele—

> Unhappy in thy end,
> Marlowe, the Muses' darling. . . .

Item: Petowe—

> Marlo, late mortall, now fram'd all divine,
> What soule more happy than that soule of thine?
> Live still in heaven thy soule, thy fame on earth.

Item: Drayton—

> . . . Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
> Had in him those brave translunary things
> That your first poets had: his raptures were
> All air and fire, which made his verses clear,
> For that fine madness still he did retain
> Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

Item: the students of Oxford—

> Marlowe was happy in his buskind muse,
> Alas unhappy in his life and end.

Item: Shakespeare—

> Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might:
> "Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?"

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GAMALIEL BRADFORD: PORTRAYER OF SOULS

by John Macy

SOMEONE should be at work on a psychograph of the late Gamaliel Bradford, someone who can add personal knowledge of the man and of his external life to the abundant self-revelation of his books. It is recorded that he was born in Boston in 1863 and that he died near Boston in his sixty-ninth year; that he was descended from as long a line of Yankees as history permits, his nominal ancestor being William Bradford of Plymouth Plantation; that he was never in robust health, though there must have been in what he calls his "damaged body" something tough, wiry, gritty, sustained by strong spiritual qualities; that illness obliged him to leave Harvard almost immediately after he entered and that he had no formal, institutional education; that, as he implies humorously in the introductory paragraph of the essay on Lenin, he inherited enough to live on and was not compelled from without to work for his daily bread. The impulsion was from within; he worked industriously and fruitfully; the eighteen or more admirable volumes are there to prove it, and it is pleasant to know that he won much of such practical success as an author craves.

Bradford did not invent but developed in his own way a method or kind of biography which he calls psychography, literally "soul-writing"—though this does not translate it at all. About the time that his first published work appeared, *The Century Dictionary* (1889, 1895) defined "psychography" as "the natural history of mind; the description of the phenomena of mind; a branch of psychology". In the Appendix to *Lee the American* (1912) Bradford calls it a "new name recently invented". What is new is Bradford's personal application of it. In the first chapter of *A Naturalist of Souls* (1917) he discusses the word and his general theory of biography. The gist of it is in a single sentence: "Psychography is the condensed, essential, artistic presentation of character". It is free from the chronological pattern of narrative biography. A psychograph is not quite a "portrait", because it is not static but fluid. And Bradford would deny that psychography is a "branch of psychology", because psychology deals with principles and uses individuals to illustrate the principles, whereas psychography deals with individuals and uses the principles of psychology, and of any other "ology", to throw light on the character of this and that person. It is interesting that Bradford, having coined the word for himself, as he says, found that Saintsbury had used it a few years earlier in relation to Sainte-Beuve. But Bradford, though excellently precise in his use of words, is no stickler for terms, and he smilingly admits that "psychograph" will not do, for publisher or public, in the title of a book.

Terms and labels aside, what has Bradford done? He has written a hundred short studies, portraits of men and women, including some literary-critical essays; four volumes, each devoted to an individual, Lee, Darwin,

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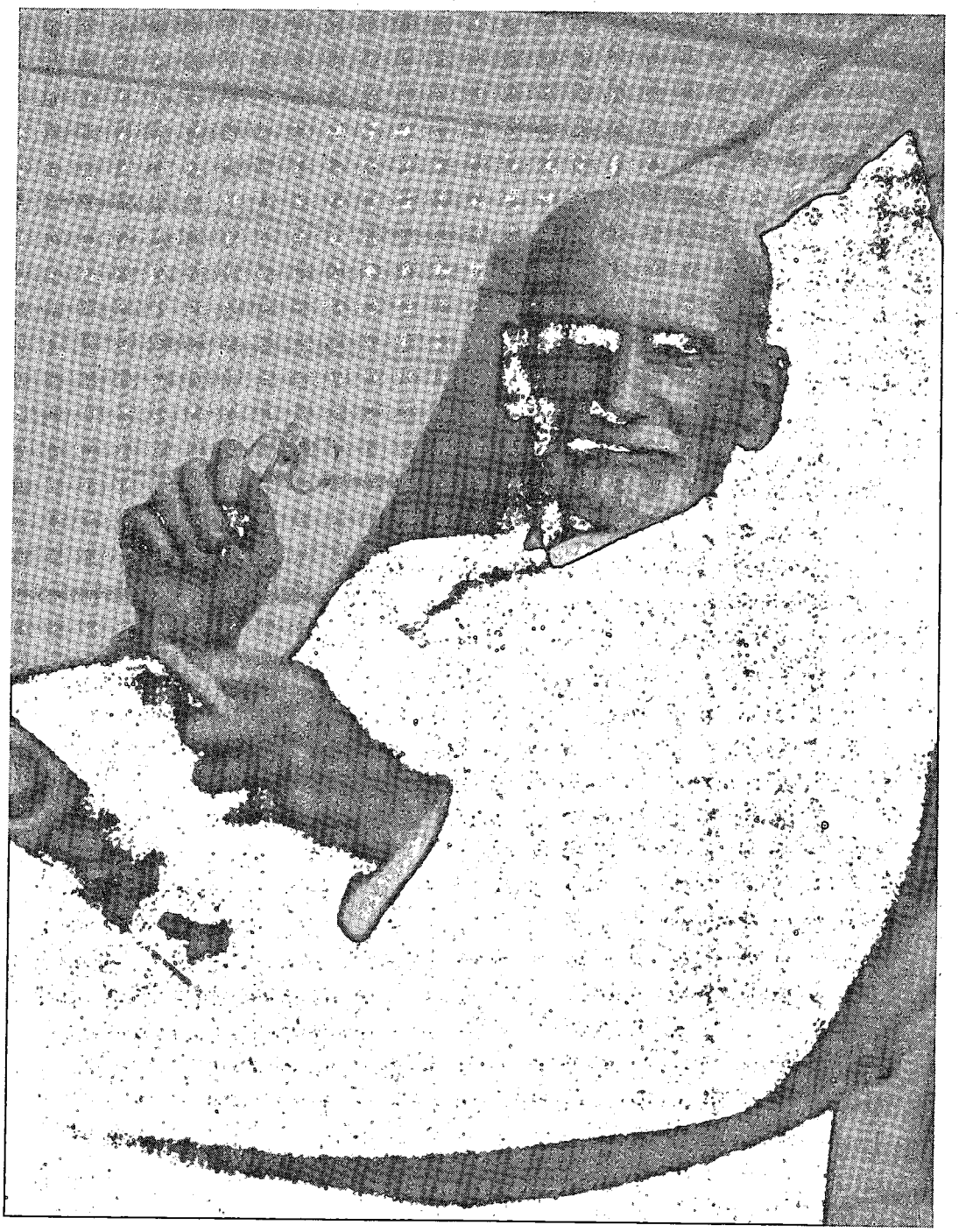

Photographed by Doris Ulmann

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GAMALIEL BRADFORD

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Pepys, D. L. Moody; and the quintessence of his experience, reading, and reflection, *Life and I: An Autobiography of Humanity*. He has examined and rejoiced in a wide diversity of creatures, a gallery in which are all sorts and conditions of men and women of many races, nations, periods of history: Jesus and Saint Francis of Assisi; Talleyrand and Benjamin Butler; Madame de Maintenon and Emily Dickinson; Ovid and Henry Adams. And which of them is not treated with sagacity and skill? Almost no one reader is intimate with all the persons of whom Bradford has chosen to write. So that his work as a whole offers a double experience: he gives you his view of a man whom you think you know, or thought you did; he introduces you to a man whom in a life of miscellaneous reading you have missed, but whom you forthwith determine to know if life lasts long enough. More than half his subjects are American, obviously because he knows more about America than about the rest of the world, and also because he takes patriotic pride in celebrating his countrymen—it is a kind of patriotism which admits no scoundrel.

Why did Bradford undertake to exemplify in his work the truth that the proper study of mankind is man? Partly because he was ambitious to be a writer; he made excursions, not very startling, into verse and fiction. But his greater impulse was to find out for himself how men have lived, with what motives, with what results, in order to become a better and wiser man himself. He says, quite understandably, that he "lived for ten years with the soul of Robert E. Lee and it really made a little better man of me". Then he says: "Six months of Mark Twain made me a worse. I even caught his haunting exaggeration of profanity. And I am fifty-six years old and not over-susceptible to infection. What can he not do to children of sixteen?" One answer might be that Mark Twain would do the children much good and no harm, that they would not get his bitterness any more than they would be poisoned by the satiric venom of Gulliver. Bradford's attitude seems to me a bit too anxiously moralistic even for a New England moralist, which in a high, fine sense he is. But his concern for self-improvement and for the welfare of the race is not incompatible with an adventurous enthusiasm, an inquisitive gusto in observing, appraising, enjoying, sometimes not too violently damning, that variously engaging creature, the human being.

With man as subject you can play a selfish game, a continuous theft which much enriches you and makes none poor indeed; you see what you can get out of your fellow man for your amusement and instruction; and then you can free yourself from all selfishness (and at the same time fatten your ego) by passing on to others what has amused and instructed you. Such is the main motive of makers of song and story, of historians, biographers, dramatists, writers of fiction, essayists, and (a few) philosophers. Idle people as well as scholars and thinkers find the study of humanity not only necessary but fascinating. "It is", says Bradford, "perhaps the most justifiable of pursuits, since in studying others we are studying ourselves and fitting ourselves for larger and more perfect adjustment to life." Bradford writes of Henry Ford, who said that history is bunk and then collected Wayside Inns and antiques: "The explanation seems to be that he is immensely interested in the past, provided it concerns himself. Perhaps a little wider study would have taught him that the history of the whole world exists only to throw light upon you and me and Henry Ford". More generally, he says that after all there is not one of the

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essential elements of character "that is not present to some extent in you and me, and it is endlessly delightful to consider why they have not put you and me where they put Roosevelt and Mussolini". So Mark Twain found in himself all the qualities of human nature, good and bad, in sufficient quantities to enable him to understand them in others. The gift of understanding human nature is itself a possession common to human nature, and we all have it to some degree. Without it we could not run a peanut stand or manage a government or write a biography. The man of action driving to a practical end needs special kinds of understanding according to his goal. The philosophic biographer has no end in view except understanding for its own sake. Or at least that is his chief end.

We may all have the motives and ambitions of Napoleon or of Bradford. Motive and ambition amount to nothing without equipment. Bradford's equipment, inborn and acquired, is almost perfect for his purpose. Regarded in its totality, his work makes him the supreme biographer of our time, though no doubt any one of a score of biographies written in this century can be advanced as superior even to his best. It has become tiresomely usual to group him, in resemblance and contrast, with Lytton Strachey. The two men are not much alike, except in the generally inclusive sense that they are alert modern minds with biography as their subject. There seems little point in saying that Bradford preceded Strachey, as if they were contestants for priority in a patent right. One admires rather the intended praise than the critical justice of Mencken's saying that "this Bradford is the man who invented the formula of Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*". I doubt if a formula can be found in Strachey's book or if one can be deduced from all his books, and I think he never analyzed and codified his method, as Bradford did. Certainly the excellent qualities of the two men are not the same. Bradford is the better informed and more careful historian, and the scope of his subjects is much broader. Strachey's brilliant mind was unscholarly, if not lazy; he did not delve assiduously into sources, but seemed content with secondary information. You cannot always trust him round the corner with a fact, though you applaud the grace with which he turns the corner. Strachey shapes his material to dramatic effects and to some effects that are not dramatic but are a clever, whimsical indulgence of the spirit of caricature. His most splendid passages are beyond the reach of Bradford's more prosaic talent. But this is not to say that Bradford is incapable of dramatic effect and poetic phrasing. His concluding paragraphs, if not dramatic, are marvellously well-turned, luminous finalities that leave you satisfied as if a curtain had dropped. The end of *Lee the American* brings tears; the lovely littleness of the episode is tremendous, not a smashing climax nor even the repose of death, but the more than tragic completion of a life perfect in failure. "Literature can add nothing to that."

Neither Bradford nor Strachey is guilty of adding to the mongrel breed of "fictionized biography", which is a deliberate mixture of genres and is quite different from the confusion of fact and fiction due to the source material or to the biographer's honest failure to discriminate. Bradford's discrimination and the keenness of his interpretations are extraordinary. He handles evidence like a super-detective. He would have been a great lawyer and judge; fortunately he was not so wasted but was directed to the higher wisdom of literature. In his examination of character he sets down some recorded fact; then

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he considers whether the fact as reported is credible; then he reflects on what it means. It may mean two or three things, and he ponders each possible meaning. Finally he takes you adroitly into his argument, as if you were deciding for yourself, and so he tells you what a fact means, without a touch of dogmatism, and you find that you have accepted his interpretation. A person has been drawn for you, and unless you are an expert student of this particular historic figure or unless your inexpert opinions are too stubbornly fixed, you have no disposition to change Bradford's delineation. He makes you respect, if not love, people whose actions and beliefs you oppose or even detest. I found myself almost not disliking Frances Willard of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, whom Bradford says he could not bear but whom because of his aversion he made all the more effort to appreciate. Bradford's persuasion is not the too cunning, insinuating kind that takes you unawares and tricks your confidence. He can be downright, point-blank and assertive when he chooses to be. But he is always flexible. He establishes the lines of a character; yet it is as if the clay had not quite set and stiffened into unyielding permanence. That is why he objects to the word "portrait" and is wary of ultimates. "If the psychographer had not become hardened to the feeling that no conclusion about human character is ever final, he would have given up a hundred times in despair."

This feeling for the human being as an unsettled problem is due to a fundamental tolerance of human nature, which is itself one of the good qualities of human nature. Bradford's avowed master, Sainte-Beuve, is tolerant; but in a cool intellectual way. So that Bradford is not wholly in sympathy and agreement with the French "naturalist of souls". Bradford says that the wisest observers of humanity, even when they have teased and mocked and ridiculed, have always loved. "It is in this point of love that Sainte-Beuve is weakest. He prided himself on understanding everything—and I think a little on loving nothing. Therefore his very subtlest work is sometimes bitter, and bitterness is no help to psychography or to anything else." It may be questioned whether bitterness is such a useless quality; to some of us it is exhilarating rather than depressing when we meet it in literature—in Swift and in Mark Twain. But the passage is a declaration of Bradford's faith and character. He loves human beings. He hates mean qualities but he can have affection for people who are damaged by them; for him a defect is a damage rather than a reprehensible sin.

One mode of tolerance, or ingredient of it, is humour. The Yankee Bradford has the kind of humour which is sometimes miscalled "dry", and is really a fluent undercurrent of quiet comment, never a crackling joke, and seldom detachable for quotation. At the risk of disturbing the easy and dignified motion of his thought, I quote this from *Life and I*: "There are the more physiological abnormalities, such as perversion, Sadism, Masochism, words become so pleasantly familiar to the astonishing youth of the present day that one has no hesitation in using them anywhere. In fact, they appear to be taught in the kindergarten, with, or without, the alphabet".

In analyzing a personality into its component elements Bradford discerns certain qualities, love of power, ambition, cruelty, generosity, kindness, the hundred abstractions the common names of which we use every day. But a collection of qualities does not make a person. We must go deeper and find out, if we can, what those qualities are

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in themselves and in association. Bradford loves to play with the quality of qualities, with the meaning of this virtue and that vice, with the meaning of the inclusive abstractions, vice and virtue. For example, a reformer is devoted to a Cause, a general is devoted to the welfare of his army and to the national loyalties he serves. How far does the reformer enjoy having an evil to fight, how deeply is he thrilled at the thought of himself as leader? How far does the most patriotic and self-sacrificing general, disclaiming all thought of personal glory, find, in the very act of renunciation and sacrifice, delicious satisfaction of the ego? How far is identification with the will of God, self-annihilating humility, a form of self-aggrandizement, consoling and flattering to the proud I? Bradford's discussions of these fine questions are wise contributions to psychology and to ethics, the more so because they are specifically applied, because they illuminate and are illuminated by a single separate person. At least for the moment a single person is under consideration, though other persons are called in as parallel cases, contrary witnesses, counter-advocates.

The culmination of Bradford's work and play is *Life and I: An Autobiography of Humanity*, written four or five years before he died; it is a beautiful book, philosophic in the derivative meaning of the word. The "I" is any individual I, for which Bradford is the spokesman, and there is just enough of a private nature to make the book his intellectual autobiography. The most striking chapter is a psychographical examination of Jesus and the New Testament, which would have been a daring thing to try in America forty years ago and in itself shows how far we have come from the age of Moody—and of Ingersoll. The dominant interests of life—Love, Power, Beauty, Thought, and Faith—which compose and embrace the individual, are related to each other in *Life and I* and summarized into a unit as coherently and solidly constructed as a great bridge. But the image is not rigid, for over the bridge moves humanity.

To be impartial and yet not to straddle and trim and compromise; to be both reverent and sceptical; to be moderate in tone and yet firm, even passionate, in conviction; to understand both sides and yet place unequivocally a preponderance of emphasis on one side—all this is to be endowed with a truly balanced mind and a rich, generous nature. Bradford, a modest, timid man, as he says of himself, full of misgivings, afraid of making decisions, lacking confidence and assurance, fearful each day that in spite of encouraging success he can write no more, has erected from the lives of stronger and weaker men a glorious egotism, has effected an *entente cordiale* between the individual and the universe. The character that emerges from his many studies of character is Bradford's.

Perhaps there is no need for someone else to write a psychograph of him; he has written it.

BOOKS BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD

(Unless otherwise indicated the books are published by Houghton Mifflin)

CHIEFLY BIOGRAPHICAL: *Types of American Character (essays). Macmillan, 1895; Lee the American. 1912; Confederate Portraits. 1914; Union Portraits. 1916; Portraits of Women. 1916; A Naturalist of Souls. Dodd, Mead, 1917; Portraits of American Women. 1916; American Portraits, 1875-1900. 1922; Damaged Souls. 1923; The Soul of Samuel Pepys. 1924; Bare Souls. Harpers, 1924; Wives. Harpers, 1925; Darwin. 1926; The Haunted Biographer. University of Washington, 1927; D. L. Moody: A Worker in Souls. Doran, 1927; Life and I. 1928; As God Made Them. 1929; Early Days in Wellesley. Wellesley National Bank. 1929; Daughters of Eve. 1930; The Quick and the Dead. 1931; Saints and Sinners. 1932.*

OTHER THAN BIOGRAPHICAL: *The Pageant of Life (verse). Badger, 1904; The Private Tutor. 1904; Between Two Masters. 1906; Matthew Porter: A Story of Today. Page, 1908; Unmade in Heaven (a play). Dodd, Mead, 1917; A Prophet of Joy (verse). 1920; Shadow Verses. Yale University Press, 1920.*

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METHOD IN THEIR MADNESS

SIDELIGHTS ON THE WRITING HABITS OF AUTHORS — PART ONE

by Edward Weeks

One of the fancied compensations of manuscript reading is the occasional thought that by so doing one feels the pulse of the times. People usually write about what is uppermost in their minds, and so by using his eyes an editor comes to know something of the thoughts and impulses that are stirring his contemporaries the world over. Today—as an elementary example—it is remarkable how many manuscripts, fiction and non-fiction, express that pessimism, that darkening uncertainty which is the result of hard times. Furthermore, in the book trade with which I am most familiar my figures show that more is being written in these lean years than when there was corn in Canaan. How inextricably the need of money is bound up with creative aspiration no psychologist can tell. There are probably scores of impulses that lead people to commit themselves on paper. It may be the need of money; it may be in emulation of an arresting book or in outcry against injustice; the prompting may come to you in the middle of an October morning or at the end of a sleepless night, but whatever the circumstance the idea of writing a story, poem, or novel does occur to almost every literate person at least once in a lifetime. For most of us the impulse does not survive long enough for us to learn how to set the madness to work. And perhaps that is just as well for our spruce trees.

"Literary England", so we are told by the pertinent news-sheet *Time*, "is excited about Dr. Archibald Joseph Cronin. A Scottish medico of thirty-four, his writing apprenticeship was served in concocting such unlikely sellers as *A History of Aneurism, Dust-Inhalation by Haematite Miners, First Aid In Coal Mines*. He took a vacation last summer, wrote *Hatter's Castle* in some three strenuous months. Gollancz, first English publisher to see the manuscript, accepted it with cheers. So did the Book Society of London. Though Dr. Cronin served in the surgical corps during the war, has travelled widely, has been down 500 coal mines in the course of research work, he thinks his most exciting experience was the news that *Hatter's Castle* had been accepted. Its sales will tell him whether to go on doctoring or write professionally; he will not do both. Married, he has two sons, likes to golf at St. Andrews, fish for salmon on the Tweed."

As we skim through that thumb-nail biography our first response is the twinge of envy we naturally feel at another's success. We feel pleasantly covetous to think that Dr. Cronin, now exempt from miners' complaints, may have plenty of time to play golf at St. Andrews, fish for salmon on the Tweed, and incidentally to write more books. There, we think, but for the grace of God, go I. But to those whose literary susceptibilities have been sharpened either by ambition or disappointment there are three phrases in Dr. Cronin's sketch which are particularly engaging: "A Scottish medico of thirty-four";

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"He took a vacation last summer, wrote *Hatter's Castle* in some three strenuous months"; "Its sales will tell him whether to go on doctoring or write professionally; he will not do both".

"A Scottish medico of thirty-four" means presumably that Dr. Cronin is still young enough to feel but old enough to have been through the war and to have garnered that experience which, as Professor Copeland used to say, is hardly sufficient for novel-writing before thirty. The early thirties, I note, are a time when a good many people turn diametrically away from what they have been doing—bond-selling, marriage, school-teaching—to devote themselves to a different form of self-expression, for which they may or may not be fitted. It is an especially dangerous age for those infected with *cacoethes scribendi*. Thomas Hardy making up his mind to abandon architecture for Wessex, John Galsworthy making it his business to be a man of letters rather than a man of property, Walter de la Mare, writing harder and harder to escape from his drudgery of bookkeeping—these are a few of the hundreds who "made their break", as we say of an escaped prisoner, in the early thirties.

In the case of our Scotch doctor a break was definitely to be attempted. "He took a vacation last summer, wrote *Hatter's Castle* in some three strenuous months." A quarter of a million words of fiction, conceived in ninety days, is not as some might suppose a gift from the gods. The old chemical formula for genius—90% perspiration, 10% inspiration—were better held responsible. Inspiration can come from a hundred sources, but perspiration, of a more common origin, is usually the result of methodical toil. The methods which Dr. Cronin may have employed, the methods by which other writers produce their work, I am anxious to inquire into. Authors, like lovers, have a charming propensity for talking about themselves. It ought, therefore, to be possible to sift their statements in search, not so much of generalizations (since each has his pet idiosyncrasies) as for those rules of thumb, those self-taught methods of which necessity was the mother.

II

A friend of mine writes an editorial each week for a certain periodical whose interests are primarily educational. He pays a weekly visit to a nearby university and from his newspaper and magazine reading he keeps a little clipping bureau of his own. Sunday evening is his habitual time for composition. One or two days in advance he sorts through his clippings to find those which have some bearing on a subject then in public view. Having fixed on a topic, let us say "Weekends and the Undergraduate", he rereads the apposite items, drops them into his mind, and then goes on about his business. Sunday night he takes pencil and paper, shuts up his wife, and then begins to fish in his mind for his ideas. They come to the surface not as borrowed newspaper reports but as a small, smooth, rounded discussion of a fairly live nature. In two days' time an oyster has grown up around his paste pearl. At first he felt that this was lucky. Now it is a practice so unfailing as to be a method.

Every few months I undertake to write a magazine article. Fortunately such writing is not my only means of support. I say fortunately, for the ideas that succeed in taking root in my mind are like the remains of an American forest, about one tree to an acre. I *can* tell, however, when a sapling begins to sprout, first by the fact that in my meandering I keep coming back to an idea which seems to grow on acquaintance, and secondly, by the occurrence of a title-phrase

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which defines the subject and which is, as you might say, the first new green leaf. It then follows that my casual reading begins to act as a kind of fertilizer: authorities, quotations and, when needed, anecdotes are collected in support of my topic. This hot-house treatment may go on for two weeks or a month before I settle down to the actual business of writing, and, even after I have begun, the outline of my essay may not be clarified. The beginning writes itself easily and usually with a good deal of fresh enthusiasm (which is important); then the various sections begin to relate themselves into a kind of form. I make my outline and so recognize (with dismay!) how much has to be done. So the roots go down and the idea spreads out and when I need fresh sap I reread the opening paragraphs with their supply of enthusiasm.

"Some day", said Sydney Porter to his friend and editor, Bob Davis, "I'll tell you how I fell heir to enough spare time to take up fiction seriously." Though the confidence was never put into words he was alluding, of course, to the two years he spent in the Ohio Penitentiary. To be shut in, whether for civil or physical complaints, is sometimes a very fortunate thing for a literary man, as Bunyan and Marcel Proust bear witness. In their biography of O. Henry, *The Caliph of Bagdad,* Mr. Davis and his collaborator, Mr. Maurice, have made it possible to follow this writer's development in some detail. Of O. Henry's fertility it is enough to say that during eleven creative years he produced some six hundred pieces of short fiction.

Circumstances brought Sydney Porter, aged thirty-six, as it brought that earlier writer of fiction, Daniel Defoe, to prison. From Defoe's time in Newgate came *Moll Flanders*; from the Ohio Penitentiary Porter emerged having discovered his narrative ability and in all probability the *nom de plume* which he was to make famous. A trusted prisoner, Porter acted as drug clerk, part of whose duty it was to spend two or three hours each night visiting the tiers of cells. Misery loves company, and many of the inmates came to tell their life stories to the taciturn man who gave them pills. And unquestionably the gray walls turned his thoughts in upon himself, to his early days in Georgia and Texas, and to Central America whence he had returned for his trial.

Listening, brooding, Porter began to write. He was on especially good terms with the Western outlaws (his early stories dealt with the West), he drew Jimmy Valentine from one of his associates, a safe-blower, and in a subsequent volume, *The Gentle Grafter,* are many of the tales, disguised and perfected, which were told him on his nightly rounds. His writing was done after his tour of duty and after a midnight supper. "After he had written for perhaps two hours," says Al Jennings, a fellow prisoner, "he would rise, make a round of the hospital and then come back to his work again. He got checks at different times and once told me that he had had only two stories rejected while he was in prison."

On his release, O. Henry, a nonentity, came to New York City. In 1902, his first metropolitan year, he published nineteen stories; in 1904 he published seventy-five. To average a story and a half a week requires constant invention. Here as in the darker years I believe his method was the same. At his window on Irving Place, strolling the Bowery, on a park bench, or in any one of a dozen saloons he watched and listened while people, down-and-outers mostly, talked. "I venture to say", writes Mr. Davis, "that in New York there were a hundred wasters with whom Sydney Porter had more conversation than

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he did with any of his intimates." Sometime in the course of that talk would come that idea which like a mainspring would put a whole story in vibration. Given the idea, it followed naturally for him to fit it into one of the backgrounds with which he was at home, and to phrase it to the best of his technique. George Jean Nathan tells of meeting O. Henry in company with S. S. McClure. "What are you going to do tonight?" asked McClure. "I'm going to persuade a hobo to give me three hundred dollars," was the answer. "On a bet?" asked McClure. "Not at all. That's the price of a story, and I'm going to rub up against some tramps down on the Bowery until one of them suggests a plot to me."

There are two hobbies of that prodigious novelist E. Phillips Oppenheim, which he can depend on for the suggestion of ideas: his absorption in secret international history, and his delight in cafés. Here are his own words: "I have made it a hobby for many years to frequent the cafés in all the cities which I visit on my travels. I make the acquaintance of the *maître d'hôtel* whenever possible and in my conversation with him, and by studying the types represented among the patrons, a good idea for a story inevitably suggests itself. Once, in a little café in Paris, a café frequented by all classes, I started one of my novels. As I was seated at one of the small tables, a young French dancing girl told me the story that formed the plot. Then and there I actually wrote the first chapter. . . .

"It is in these great cities that men meet and mingle who shape the destinies of nations. There is no more thrilling subject than the activities of these men. The romance of secret diplomacy has enthralled me for years; I have tried to reason out the desires and ambitions of various nations through these secretive individuals. I have reasoned to myself, 'This nation is aiming toward this', and 'That nation is aiming toward that'; then I have invented my puppets representing these conflicting ambitions and set them in action. If I have frequently reached conclusions that later developments in the real world have established as true, it is because I have reasoned in a logical manner and not through any supernatural insight. After all, the roadways that great nations desire to travel are plain enough." And he adds: "I do not know how a novel will develop when I begin it. I get a vision of about two good characters—the man (he's the main thing) and the woman (very secondary). These two elements, together with my first chapter, constitute my preparation".

I have tried to show a working principle common to the preparation of an editorial, the struggles of an infrequent essayist, and the fertility of O. Henry and Oppenheim. At the outset each mind is searching for an idea which it believes itself capable of shaping and developing—by whatever technique—and to which it is ready to impart certain accents, informative, provocative or entertaining as the case may be. In the early stages this search for material is hit or miss but with experience it becomes methodical. Ideas are the raw materials of your factory and you must have a supply on hand before worrying about your designs or tools. Mr. H. G. Wells may sometimes be troubled by an over-stock but the rest of us need all we can lay our hands on.

III

As an undergraduate I can well remember wanting to write without having anything important enough to write about. Said Arnold Bennett about his first novel, "I knew what I wanted to do and I could not do it.

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I felt but I could not express". This condition I take to be chronic with a good many beginners. If you are a poet there is always death or disappointed love, the sea or the seasons; but those themes somehow lose their point in prose. In my salad days, and ever since, I have seen a good many people who were all dressed up for Literature but didn't know where to find her. For most who are in that quandary I am dead sure that the best way to begin is in that field with which you are most familiar. I do not mean that you must write a book roasting your parents or start off on a novel about a person with an attractive name who has done almost everything that you have done. But I do mean that you should pitch on some well-remembered community and landscape in which to work with your first characters.

As witness I wish to quote a digest of Willa Cather's admirable statement in a recent issue of *The Colophon:* "My first novel, *Alexander's Bridge*," she writes, "was very like what painters call a studio picture. It was the result of meeting some interesting people in London, and at that time I found the new more exciting than the familiar. The impressions I tried to communicate on paper were genuine, but they were very shallow. Soon after the book was published I went for six months to Arizona and New Mexico. The longer I stayed in a country I really did care about, and among people who were a part of the country, the more unnecessary and superficial a book like *Alexander's Bridge* seemed to me.

"When I got back to Pittsburgh I began to write a book entirely for myself; a story about some Scandinavians and Bohemians who had been neighbours of ours when I lived on a ranch in Nebraska. I found it a much more absorbing occupation than writing *Alexander's Bridge*. Here there was no arranging or 'inventing'; everything was spontaneous and took its own place, right or wrong. This was like taking a ride through a familiar country on a horse that knew the way, on a fine morning when you felt like riding. The other was like riding in a park, with someone not altogether congenial, to whom you had to be talking all the time. Since I wrote this book for myself, I ignored all the situations and accents that were then generally thought to be necessary.

"*O Pioneers!* interested me tremendously because it had to do with a kind of country I loved, because it was about old neighbours, once very dear, whom I had almost forgotten in the excitement of growing up. But I did not in the least expect that other people would see anything in a slow-moving story, without 'action', without 'humour', without a 'hero'; a story concerned entirely with heavy farming people. *O Pioneers!* was not only about Nebraska farmers, the farmers were Swedes! At that time, 1912, the Swede had never appeared on the printed page in this country except in broadly humorous sketches; and the humour was based on two peculiarities: his physical strength, and his inability to pronounce the letter 'j'. I had certainly good reasons for supposing that the book I had written for myself would remain faithfully with me, and continue to be exclusively my property. I sent it to Mr. Ferris Greenslet, of Houghton Mifflin, who had published *Alexander's Bridge*, and was truly astonished when he wrote me they would publish it."

Since a young author will find it more congenial to write about those places in which his own shadow has been cast, the question of residence is of importance. If you want to write about racketeering arrange to live in Chicago. But seriously, it is very well to keep the roots of your mind on some

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home soil, and this, I think, needs saying at a time when it is fashionable to go abroad on the slightest pretext. It is not uncommon to observe a promising novelist who has produced, let us say, one or two sturdy books about Wisconsin, pack up his bags and move to the Riviera. The rest is too often silence. One might add parenthetically that when Sinclair Lewis determined to write *Main Street* he burned his bridges and went not to St. Jean de Luz but to Sauk Center, the town of his birth. Not, of course, that you have to keep your author down on the farm until he can write of nothing more exciting than cows. In any profession a man will branch out from his early beginning and to do so he will need a change of scene. I know the stimulus of travel. I admit the recommendations of foreign residence, especially for a short time: it is cheaper, the wine is better, the women seem more seductive, the seclusion more complete. But year after year is another thing. "It is well to travel occasionally, but if a man wants to write about his country, he must live in it," said Eugene O'Neill on his last return from abroad. "The tempo, the attitude, the psychology of Europe are different and one unconsciously absorbs these things. To write of Americans, one must live in America, breathe its atmosphere, experience its reactions, live its kind of life, and feel the pulse of the people."

Unless, then, a writer is as mature in his experience as Conrad or as cosmopolitan in his culture as Henry James, it is exceedingly difficult for his mind to grow on some strange heath. Such an exception is that accomplished essayist, James Norman Hall, who like Stevenson has found the South Seas conducive to his best work. I hope he will not object to my remembering how after a long residence at Tahiti he felt that he needed a change of scene and so went off to the exactly opposite end of the earth, to Iceland. Editors were naturally interested in the material which he might turn up, and so, after his Nordic winter, Hall stopped off at Boston to set down some impressions while they were fresh. But grind as he would the right words would not come, and finally he shut up shop and went home to the Pacific. There in Tahiti several months later Iceland came back to him, and his papers were written to the delight of all. Though we may seek them far and wide it seems to me that our ideas respond best in a surrounding that we have made our own.

Your search for ideas will be governed by inclination whether you travel or stay at home. Tennyson used to reserve his postprandial hours as a time ripe for poetic suggestion. Milton found his happiest vein in the autumn, Mark Twain in the summertime. Robert Frost has told me of how he walks the city streets or country roads by deep night when perceptions are sharpened by the stillness.

Arthur Brisbane, the highest paid editorial writer in the world, is said to be driven to and fro in New York City in a car equipped with a dictaphone. On his way he sees things that strike him and what he observes is immediately spoken into the mouthpiece. This is later transcribed by a stenographer and becomes the basis for reflective work written in the office. When he travels by train he uses a compartment and a dictaphone goes with him to catch the instant impression. To turn to the other extreme, I understand that Thornton Wilder had never visited South America when he wrote *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. He used a method of literary saturation; books contributed far more to his understanding than any Cook's tour might have done.

(To be concluded next month)

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FARTHEST NORTH

A STUDY OF JAMES JOYCE

by Elliot Paul

I FIRST saw James Joyce in a small room of the old Pleyel establishment on the lower slope of Montmartre. A group, including Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway, had gathered there to hear George Antheil's arrangement of his *Ballet Mécanique* for the player piano. Nearly everyone was standing, for there were very few chairs, but Joyce, whom I recognized at once from the photographs which had appeared in various newspapers and magazines, had placed one of the small folding seats near the only window and was sitting with his face turned towards the light. His attitude showed that he was listening intently and was trying to isolate himself from the slight commotion of the crowd.

Joyce's face is as familiar to others as it was to me. His forehead is high and narrow, he wears a small pointed beard of the style known as a "goatee", his air is detached and languid. A few artists, after a struggle with Sylvia Beach (who protects him from callers with a zeal which amounts at times to fury), have drawn him from life and two painters have painted portraits of him, but very badly. I think the reason that photographers succeed so well with Joyce while artists portray him so falsely lies in the fact that the latter depend too much upon eyes and Joyce's eyes, except when they are obscured by thick glasses, look unmistakably weak, as they are. This physical misfortune affords the key to much of his life and his work.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man makes it clear, although it never states the fact directly, that its author had trouble with his eyesight even in his early years. Stephen Dedalus, as Joyce calls himself, did not care for athletic games, he was shy and supersensitive and had the keen ambitions which often go with a sense of physical inferiority. Joyce has never been blind, but for the last several years he has seen outlines dimly and for reading purposes has been obliged to use strong complicated lenses. Since the war he has had to submit to an almost continual series of operations in order to retain what sight he has. The result is that his hearing and his memory have developed abnormally.

Mrs. Joyce, a simple candid Irish woman, is very patient with her nervous husband, but she has little appreciation of his work. One of her sincere regrets is that he did not pursue a career on the concert stage.

"James Joyce, the *writer*," she once said regretfully to a friend. "And to think that once he sang on the same stage with John McCormack!"

In their living room not long ago, Mrs. Joyce remarked without the slightest ironical intent that she had nothing to read and wished she could get the works of some of the "good Irish humorists". Joyce glanced at me slyly and smiled. It is no secret that his wife has not read the major part of his writings. After she had left the room he took up some proof sheets of *Work in Progress* and said, rather wistfully:

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"I think this is funny, don't you? At least, I mean it to be."

I replied that I found it very amusing, as I did, although nearly all the pages I remembered as being humorous he himself had explained to me, syllable for syllable. He knew this as well as I did, and yet he was almost childishly pleased by my complimentary remark. The abuse which has been heaped upon him from all quarters of the world has done its work, in making him over-susceptible to praise and to blame. Once, I know, he went to bed for two days because a man for whom he had not the slightest artistic regard wrote disparagingly of his recent efforts. When a mutual friend told him that James Stephens had found his *Anna Livia Plurabelle* musical, Joyce's face lighted with joy which diminished only slightly when the friend added that Stephens had also said that he was sure the general public would never understand it. The next time I called, I found Joyce peering through his spectacles into one of Stephens's books, I believe it was *The Crock of Gold*, and trying out of gratitude to like it. He shook his head doubtfully and put the volume away.

"It's all right, but it isn't *written*," he said. "I don't see why almost anybody couldn't do that."

I do not wish, like the late Frank Harris, to give the impression that I am an intimate of celebrities, Joyce least of all, for no one is intimate with him. His daughter, a graceful adolescent girl who is learning aesthetic dancing, is, perhaps, closest to him. Only Mrs. Joyce, whose name is Nora, calls him "Jim". Sylvia Beach, his publisher, attends to his affairs and would gladly lay down her life for him, but they have remained all these years on formal and impersonal terms. She has unbounded enthusiasm for his work, but understands it little better than Mrs. Joyce.

Because of the exigencies of his work, each volume of which takes him years to complete, and the tremulous condition of his nervous system, Joyce, although he is not unsociable, does not find his diversion in his friends. Music has always been his principal source of relief and enjoyment. He likes best of all the music just preceding that with which most histories of music begin, especially the works of the neglected early English and French composers. There is seldom a concert in Paris of unusual merit, whether the program is ancient or modern, which he fails to attend. Once, in spite of his timidity, his anxiety to hear a private performance of one of Monteverdi's operas led him to go without an invitation and his "distinguished" appearance earned him unquestioned admittance without a card. It is true that no one can see him or talk with him without an awareness of his unusual qualities. Workmen, when he walks unwittingly into an area where construction is in progress, warn him gently and call him "professor" or "doctor". In fact, as a young man, after abandoning his mother's dearest wish that he should become a priest, he took up the study of medicine and surgery. His eyes proved a barrier to this ambition.

During the years when he was most engrossed with *Ulysses* Joyce was obliged to teach languages to earn his living. At that period he lived in Trieste. He and Mrs. Joyce have formed the habit of speaking Italian at home because he considers it "easiest on the voice". He could speak just as well French, German, Gaelic, Saxon, classical Latin, vulgar Latin, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Norwegian or the modern Dublin brogue. The Slavic languages he does not speak fluently but he can read and understand them, even the early church Bulgarian. In spite of this aptitude for acquiring foreign tongues, which, it must be remembered, he has had

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no unusual opportunities to study, Joyce thinks and dreams in English and his familiarity with its use ranges from the pre-Chaucerian Saxons through all the classic masters to the language of the streets of London, Arizona, New York or Bombay. When the opening instalment of *Work in Progress* was published in *transition*, I was astonished by the number of words and phrases which corresponded with modern American slang. I asked him about nearly one hundred of these and found that without exception they were of Irish origin. Joyce meets Americans, occasionally, and he scans the American newspapers, painstakingly, with his reading glass, but, like Shaw, he has no desire to visit the United States where his works have received especially barbaric treatment and the reports he receives of the cooking are not encouraging.

The last time the Sherwood Andersons were in Paris, Joyce invited them to dine with him. Since he never dines at home, the rendezvous was at the Deux Trianons, across from the Gare Montparnasse. The two writers had met but once before, in a busy crowd at the Victor Lohnases'. When the moment for ordering came Joyce asked Sherwood if he would have oysters. Anderson detests oysters, and especially French oysters, but the general embarrassment was so tense that he spoke up before his wife and answered in the affirmative. Mrs. Anderson, surprised, followed suit. Joyce called the waiter and ordered two plates of oysters and while the Andersons were struggling through theirs, he sat uneasily and waited. Mrs. Joyce also waited, but with her amazing calm. The dinner was a failure, so far as intellectual contacts were concerned, and each man left the table somewhat baffled and covertly annoyed. The incident is typical of Joyce's rare attempts at sociability. Men, however tactful, cannot get near him or his thoughts except through long acquaintance, carefully nourished and developed. He does the best he can to be approachable, but like a rare violin he responds as abruptly to an awkward touch as he does graciously when conditions are ideal. Now and then he will consent to sing for his friends, and those are marvellous evenings. He knows all the old Irish ballads and songs, which he will sing first in Gaelic and then in translation. *Blarney Castle* is one of his favorites, and after a song by Purcell or William Byrd, perhaps, he will end up with a parody he wrote in war-time of *Mr. Dooley*.

It is impossible not to see that James Joyce longs for company as much as he dreads it and that his spirit is essentially robust. He has been much compared with Rabelais, by those who like him best, and those who do not like his works quite often do not like Rabelais's either. But however accurately Joyce may reproduce in *Ulysses* the drunken remarks of a British soldier or the half-formed thoughts of a woman under physical and emotional stress, he is unusually careful of his language when he speaks within earshot of women or strangers. If he is correcting proof and the word to be changed has a ribald implication seven times removed he will look to see if the door is ajar before pronouncing it aloud.

Incredible as it may seem now just a few years later, *Ulysses* was quite generally declared to be unintelligible when first it was published. The book contains a half a million words and Joyce spent seven years writing it. Some idea of his memory may be derived from the fact that he knows this monumental work by heart. If a caller is discussing it with him, and begins to read a passage, Joyce will continue without reference to the text. He even remembers where the printer made his errors in the various editions. His

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mind contains, besides his scholastic background, an almost unlimited store of information he has picked up from chance remarks he has heard or even from slogans he has read upon signboards. By means of his extraordinary faculty for associating sounds and ideas, he is able to draw upon his remarkable accumulation of knowledge and make his major works veritable encyclopedias. His intimate and unusual grasp of human behaviour he must have acquired from his father, who was a witty and a garrulous man, and from direct observations he made as a young man in Dublin, for all his realistic works are drawn from that source and he has remained in his years of exile more Irish than Ireland itself, which has lost a part of its savour, no doubt, as the British have relaxed their hold. Joyce's travels have been limited, for the most part, to Italy, France and England but in none of these countries has he taken an active part in the life around him. He is an exile from his own land and a foreigner wherever he goes. When I first saw him at the Maison Pleyel, I was shocked by the suffering which transfigured his half-averted face, but as I watched him closer I realized that only in moments of relaxation does his torment reveal itself. Ordinarily he is on his guard, maintains a somewhat hostile poise, and is sustained by his ever-active sense of humour.

II

To a stranger, the appearance of Joyce's apartment affords a shock, for the writer who is the last word in ultra-modernism and who is deemed a menace to public morals half the world over lives in an atmosphere which is abjectly bourgeoise. There are no abstractions by Picasso upon the walls, nor any rare "old masters". The walls, in fact, are covered with atrocious French wall-paper and the portraits, except for that of "Old Man Dedalus", are mediocre, to say the least. Heavy plush chairs clash in colour with the other furnishings. An upright piano stands just opposite the city fireplace of marble, equidistant from two corners. From the windows may be seen the roofs and windows of an uninteresting middle-class quarter. One would say that the rooms were occupied by a dentist of Detroit, Michigan, rather than the man who by magic of words can transform a Dublin barroom brawl into the escape of a legendary hero from the Cyclops. The visitor must remind himself that to Joyce his visual surroundings are vague and mean almost nothing. His quarters are clean and convenient. The neighbours are comparatively quiet. That is all he asks. The references in his works to nature, as seen, are hauntingly beautiful, since he has conserved the impressions of his childhood and his youth. But the world's great paintings and sculpture, all the works of art for an appreciation of which a mature mind must be coupled with a sound pair of eyes, have contributed only their doubtful literary qualities to Joyce's equipment which is otherwise so rich.

The first time I called at his apartment, after thorough preliminaries had been gone through by Miss Beach, our talk had not got fairly started when a clap of thunder sounded. Joyce's manner underwent an astonishing change. He tried unsuccessfully to remain seated and as he pulled down the window shades and turned on the lights he told me that Mrs. Joyce had taken advantage of my presence in order to attend a movie and he expressed a nervous hope that I would not find it necessary to leave the place until she had returned. I was glad to be of service and as I saw him shudder and recoil I realized that hearing a thunder-clap was an experience which depended for its

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intensity upon the state of one's nerves and the sensitivity of one's eardrums. In considering Joyce's aural impressions, the normal man must raise his own to the *n*th degree.

When it became apparent that the shower was not going to pass quickly, Joyce asked me if I would mind sitting with him in an inside room, so we took two of the dining-room chairs into the narrow hallway, closed all the doors and sat there while the thunder rumbled outside and the lights blinked as the lightning clipped the current. All this time, Joyce said not a word, except to utter ejaculations of dismay from time to time.

In the midst of the storm, Mrs. Joyce returned, wet and alarmed, and was much relieved to find me there. She told me that the year before, after consulting all their friends and the travel agencies to find a place in which their vacation might be spent without fear of thunderstorms, she and Mr. Joyce had selected Holland. The first evening at Amsterdam ushered in the worst electric storm the Low Countries had ever seen and a church steeple just across the street from the Joyces' hotel was struck by lightning and shattered. They took the first train back to Paris and it took Joyce several weeks to recover from the shock.

Joyce's daily habits are simple, and he has worked out a routine which seems to afford him the maximum of comfort and efficiency which his health will permit. His day consists almost entirely of work, which he performs slowly, on account of his eyes, but with an amazing absorption which at times resembles concentration and at others seems to be the quality exactly opposite. He rises rather late, takes his morning coffee in his room, dresses carefully and starts to write, his mind entirely free from the distractions of household conversation or news events. From all reports, he is much more fastidious about his appearance today than he was in his student days and I believe this is due to his reluctance to make his near-sightedness in any way conspicuous. He lunches lightly, in order that he may continue his work in the afternoon, and while he sits with his wife, his son and his daughter at table he seldom speaks. The words he has been scratching laboriously with a pen keep revolving in his mind and differentiating and already he is planning to improve upon them. Until tea time, he shuts himself in his study again and spends the afternoon hours revising the morning's work or the proof-sheets he has received from the printer. The surface of his table is covered with notes he has jotted down so hastily that only he can read them. The drawers and even suitcases are filled with similar scraps of paper through which he rummages and searches with infinite patience. I have known him to revise a single galley of proof seven times, and each version was so thoroughly done over that it bore only a superficial resemblance to the preceding one.

Much has been written about revolutions of the word, but Joyce does not take himself as seriously as his followers do and certainly he gives his numerous imitators no encouragement to start a "movement". Alone in his study, engaged in his intricate task, Joyce is keenly happy. He chuckles aloud when unexpected opportunities for puns present themselves.

In the evening, Joyce dispels his fatigue with his favourite white wine. The dinner hour, which he enjoys alone in some excellent restaurant, is his real hour of rest. He does not mind the clamour of an impersonal crowd, unless the voices of diners at nearby tables are too shrill, in which case he changes his table. Proprietors, chefs and waiters know he has discriminating taste and are anxious to please him. Most of them who have not

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been told otherwise believe because of his neatly trimmed beard and his impeccable French that he is a professor in the Sorbonne and respect him accordingly. Once dinner is over and he has had his coffee and liqueur he taxies home and, in spite of the stimulants, drops quickly into an exhausted sleep.

III

My great surprise in meeting Joyce was caused by his attitude toward his own achievements. I had read all his published works, *Chamber Music, Dubliners, Exiles, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* and *Ulysses,* and had felt the world-wide repercussions each one had stirred in turn. Instead of finding a haughty man, sustained by a sense of his genius and accomplishment, I came upon Joyce in one of his worst moments of doubt and disappointment. *Ulysses,* which to the rest of the world meant so much, was to him an old story, an attempt which, however effective, had necessarily fallen short of his conception. It was no longer possible for him to wring more inspiration from Dublin, as illumined by the glow of antiquity, further to exploit the soul of young Stephen Dedalus, nor to create another Leopold Bloom. The manuscript of *Work In Progress* which I hoped to secure for publication in *transition,* I learned, had already been rejected by T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, who had been among his staunchest supporters in the days when fragments of *Ulysses* were beginning to appear and to be suppressed.

Later I came to realize that at no point in James Joyce's career has he been satisfied with his own work. Stephen Dedalus's pronunciamento that the errors of an artist are portals of discovery expresses more bravado than its author has ever possessed. It will be recalled that in the lying-in hospital scene of *Ulysses,* Stephen (who, of course, is Joyce) was deeply chagrined when Buck Mulligan reminded him that he had given the world but one slim volume of verses. The volume in question may well have been *Chamber Music.* Those verses were strictly conventional in form and remarkable for their lyric beauty, but they seemed to indicate rather a cautious talent, content to apply itself within narrow limits, than the scope which has characterized Joyce's later work. To him, they must have seemed rather an indictment than a measure of his abilities.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce followed an artistic pathway which his imitators have proved to be nothing short of disastrous for lesser men. An autobiographical novel specializing in childhood and adolescent impressions, however brilliantly it may be written, is a nerve-racking task for its author and Joyce felt the sordid atmosphere of his home and the unhealthy nature of his education too keenly not to suffer acutely in writing of his early life. Even before the publication of the *Portrait* Joyce's first clash with the King's censor robbed him of the benefits of his volume of short stories called *Dubliners.* The circulation of *Dubliners* was not forbidden on the ground of obscenity, as that of *Ulysses* was to be. Its suppression was due to the fact that one of the characters in a story called *Ivy Day in the Committee Room* spoke in the customary uncomplimentary Irish fashion about Edward VII. The story of how *Ulysses* has been burned, thrown into harbours, excluded from the mails and placed upon the *Index* is too familiar and too sad to repeat. It is enough to point out that Joyce, over a period of thirty years, has been thwarted in the distribution of his most important works and that never during that time has he made the slightest concession to officialdom or to

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Mrs. Grundy. Considering his experience, it is a wonder that his sense of persecution is not more acute than it is. Unquestionably, he is as bewildered today by the attitude of indignant critics and public officials as he was when the British censor first came down on *Dubliners*.

Miss Beach for several years has conducted Joyce's business affairs and carried on his wrangles with literary pirates and publishers. Most of these unpleasant incidents are barely brought to Joyce's attention; but if his personal participation is required at a time when his work is not going well he is likely to grow petulant or even ill.

The most significant experience in Joyce's life, without a doubt, was his early conversion from Catholicism. Had he been born a Protestant, or had his mother not insisted that he become a priest, as the best way of applying the brilliance she saw in her strange son, I doubt if his genius would have had that explosive and fundamentally rebellious quality which is its principal strength. He is not a bitter anti-clerical, but to this very day he relishes keenly the joys of non-belief and applies a magnificent Jesuitry to his scepticism. The effect of youthful visions of hell upon his almost morbid imagination can best be estimated by a reading of the *Portrait*. By the time he had reached the dramatic night-town episode in *Ulysses* the long legendary history of man's descent into the inferno had become as comical as it was terrible to him and in that passage his wit flares and crackles like some huge unearthly pyrotechnical display. Although his readers have difficulty in recognizing the fact, an endless irreverent discussion as to the nature of original sin pervades *Work in Progress*. The significance of the thunderbolt, as Vico interprets it, driving primitive man into the cave, is especially meaningful to Joyce, who dreads it so thoroughly whenever threatening clouds obscure the sky.

It is easy to understand how a man like Joyce, so well grounded in literary tradition and familiar with the epics of all the principal languages, feels almost desperately anxious about the course he has chosen in breaking completely with past methods of writing. His career has been characterized by a series of experiments, each on a larger scale than the preceding one. At no point, I repeat, has he been complacent or cock-sure. It was not economic pressure nor a thirst for more glory which led him, after *Ulysses*, to embark upon the much-ridiculed *Work in Progress*. Progressively, since he was in school, he has been getting further out of touch with life and more and more intrigued with words. He knows that what he is doing now may be appraised as mere laboratory work, but some perverse curiosity within him drives him northward as his old companions, one by one, turn back toward the good safe temperate zone. It seems to him possible, at least, in view of the changes now in progress in the world, that the English language, much modified and expanded to admit all the other languages which have contributed to it or which border upon it, will become universal. Also he sees interesting relationships between the myths of various times and lands. So his prose has grown complicated, obscure and is almost completely dehumanized, like the abstractions of modern painting and music, and in a single sentence he jumbles together four or five languages. Many critics who have shown good judgment in other matters say that Joyce has gone crazy, others insist that he is fooling away his time. Actually, he is miles farther from insanity than many other men, past or present, who have accomplished a masterpiece before reaching the age of fifty. He has

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shown no tendency to seek a mental narcotic and has as little evangelical zeal as he had in the days when his aloofness from Irish politics earned him the censure of many of his countrymen and contemporaries. If *Work in Progress*, which sometime is to have a name, is judged to be worthless as literature and merely goes down as a philological curiosity Joyce will be disappointed but eventually will recover, I am sure.

Today he is not much more than fifty years old, his health is no worse than it has been for decades and his spirit, although turned inward more than ever by the rejection of his recent efforts by his former friends, is mellow when he is at his best and at his worst is not vituperative nor Messianic. As the pendulum of his life continues to swing from the triumph of belated appreciation to the despair of self-distrust, it takes a wider rather than a narrower arc but it makes only the necessary brief pause at either extremity. To his neighbours he seems to be a studious and quiet middle-aged man whose habits are steady and who is eccentric only in the matter of going away from home each day at dinner-time. His family, the members of which never enter his study when he is working there, sometimes wonder if he is aware of their existence at all. Often when I would appear with a sheet of proof which had been metamorphosed a half dozen times, Mrs. Joyce would smile whimsically as she met me at the doorway and would shake her head and nod toward the room in which her husband was waiting, as if we were taking part in some harmless make-believe game. She had the same attitude, no doubt, when Joyce was working on *Ulysses*.

I regret to say that I do not believe Joyce will write any more epics of pre-war Dublin, and surely none concerning Paris or Rome. Just what he will do is a grave problem of which he is keenly aware. He cannot stop working, because it is an established habit with him, the only means he has of filling his days, and since his active life, aside from literature, is passing farther back each year and his memory, although it is probably the best in the world, gives the experiences of his youth a texture of the distant past, it is probable that Joyce will occupy himself more and more with the development of language for its own sake and his reputation as a superb realist will culminate in the work which is already more than ten years old. *Ulysses*, in spite of its superficial parallel with the *Odyssey* and the numerous devices by which its author conveyed states of being and of feeling which hitherto had proved too difficult to be expressed, was essentially a realistic book, and it has a tang and an earthiness which can never be achieved by a synthesis of legends and of languages in which the material is second-hand. Joyce knows this very well, and it troubles him; but, like a prospector who has found a mine and lost its ownership, he cannot live upon the steady income of praise his past performances have earned him so he wanders on and on, not always hopeful but never quite discouraged.

So Joyce will continue his daily routine, loving music and wine and all the life not denied him, remote from his admirers and contemporaries, a solitary, in many ways a pathetic figure, but one whose inner life is rich beyond the understanding of unimaginative men. Really he is a hold-over from the age which he summed up more thoroughly than anyone else and it is not impossible that posterity, ignoring the fact that in the eyes of the world today Joyce is a malicious modern who delights in gibberish, will consider him as the most gifted writer of the nineteenth century and the last important writer who was unaffected by the great war.

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"THE ORIGINAL ALICE"

by Isabel Daly

When Doris came into the dining room for lunch, Mother was telling Father about the original Alice of *Alice in Wonderland*. Doris didn't listen because she had heard it all before, several times. She slipped quietly into her place, hiding her hands, grimy from the mudpies she and Marianne had been making, under the table.

"You're late, darling," said Mother, filling a plate with cold chicken and peas and passing it to her.

"I'm sorry, Mother." She wasn't really sorry at all. What difference did it make if you were a little bit late to lunch, as long as you arrived before every thing was cleared away?

"It will be so nice", continued Mother, "for Doris when she is grown up and has children of her own to be able to tell them that when she was a little girl she went to the Lewis Carroll Centenary and saw the original Alice."

"Mm," murmured Father looking up from his magazine. "Your children have great things in store for them, Duckie."

It was the *Wall Street Magazine* he was reading. Doris recognized the cover. It was a horrid magazine; it never had any nice pictures in it. But it had a lovely name. Wall Street! Wall Street! She could see the Street. It was curved, not long and straight like other streets, and a high wall, very wide, like the great Wall of China that Miss Meek had told them about in school, was built around it. You could sit on the Wall and have picnics; you could run on it, too. Doris could see herself, hair flying in the wind, running around it. You might even build a little house up there. If Marianne were nice and let her be the mother she'd let her live there, too. They could have lots of children, little girls, and send them to school every morning and spank them when they were bad.

"It looks," said Father, swallowing the last of his strawberries and cream, "as though they're going to raise the income tax. What Congress thinks it's doing, I don't know."

"John," Mother's voice sounded cross, "I don't believe you're a bit interested in the original Alice."

"What? Why the idea!" Father looked surprised. "There's no one in New York more interested in the original Alice than I am. Isn't that so, Duckie?"

Yes, nodded Doris, her mouth full of peas. "Father, what does 'original' mean?"

"Original? Original? It means—" Father stood up and looked at his wrist watch. "I should be at the office now. You tell her, Mother, what it means." He kissed Mother. He kissed Doris. "Goodbye; see you at dinner. Enjoy the original Alice," he called back as he shut the front door.

"I'm hungry." Doris reached for another roll.

"Doris," shrieked Mother, "what awful-looking hands! You forgot to wash them again."

"I'm sorry, Mother." Doris's eyelids

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drooped; her mouth screwed itself up into a little ball. That was her sorry look. "I'll remember next time."

"Run upstairs now and start the water for your bath. And don't let it overflow this time."

"I won't." Doris raced upstairs. She had forgotten about the word original.

"Am I going to wear my party dress?" she asked after she had had her bath and Mother was digging at her finger nails. "Ouch! that hurts."

"Certainly not. It isn't a party, silly. It's like a play. We sit in seats and watch the people on the stage. I might as well give up. I'll never get this dirt out." Mother sighed and threw the nail file on the bureau.

"Will they have ice cream and cake?"

"Of course not. Here, put your hat on."

They walked to the place where the original Alice was going to be. Doris wanted to stop and look in the shop windows, but Mother wouldn't let her.

"We'll be late," she said, keeping tight hold of Doris's hand and pulling her along.

But when they reached the place where the original Alice was going to be they were early. The doors weren't even opened yet. They had to stand outside with a lot of people.

"Funny", said Mother, "that they don't open the doors and let us in."

After they had stood there almost a million years, a man in a suit like a policeman's opened the door. "Show your tickets," he cried as the people started to crowd in. "No one allowed in without a ticket."

"Give the man your tickets, dear." Mother had let Doris hold the tickets. She held them out to the man, who was talking to the lady in front of her.

"I'm sorry, Madam," he said, "you can't go in without a ticket."

"I never heard of such a thing," said the lady in a loud voice. Her face was awfully red.

"Sorry, Madam, but orders is orders. You can't go in without a ticket. Would you mind stepping aside? You're blocking the way."

"It's disgraceful, disgraceful! Why didn't they let us know we had to have tickets? Disgraceful!" The words floated back as the lady elbowed her way out of the crowd.

Doris felt sorry for her. "Why didn't she have any tickets, Mother? What does 'disgraceful' mean?"

But Mother didn't answer. She was hurrying down the aisle. "Here are some lovely seats, Doris, near the front where we can see and hear everything."

There were so many things to look at that Doris forgot all about the lady. It was a normous room with millions and millions of seats. The windows reached almost to the ceiling. You could see the trees through them and a little bit of sky and the sparrows flying about. Almost right away every seat was filled. There were lots of people who couldn't get seats. They stood up around the back and sides.

"I'm glad we came early," said Mother.

There were a few little boys and girls but most of the people were old like Mother. A big fat man with a long beard, who looked like Santa Claus, maybe he was Santa Claus's brother, sat next to Doris. She glanced shyly up at him from under her long lashes.

"Going to see Alice?" He smiled at her.

"Yes, she's been looking forward to it for a long while," answered Mother.

There was a high platform in the front of the room with a little table on it and some big chairs; back of that there were more seats. Across the top of the platform hung a long banner with a coloured picture of Alice in Wonderland holding the Flamingo,

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just like the one in the book. The White Rabbit was there, too and the Dormouse and the Cheshire Cat and the Queen of Hearts and the Red Queen and the Mad Hatter and Humpty Dumpty and Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

After they had waited a million years, a lot of girls wearing long black things like coats and funny little square hats came on the platform and sat down on the seats.

"They're the college girls who are going to sing," said Mother.

Then some boys with violins and horns—one of them had a drum—sat down in front of the girls.

"That's the college orchestra. They're going to play."

Suddenly they started to play. Everybody else stood up and clapped. Doris clapped, too.

"Look, dear. Here she comes," whispered Mother.

Doris looked but she didn't see anyone but some men and two old ladies walking up the steps of the platform. One of the men had to help the old lady who came first. She carried a cane and wore a brown silk dress and a big bunch of flowers. The other old lady didn't have any flowers. They walked slowly to the front of the platform—it was like a parade—and sat down in the big chairs. Everybody stopped clapping and sat down, too, to listen to the boys play.

"Where's Alice?" asked Doris.

"That's Alice, dear, the lady in the brown silk dress. Isn't she sweet?"

"But I mean the real Alice, that one up there."

"Don't point, Doris, and don't talk so loud. That's the story-book Alice. The real Alice that Lewis Carroll wrote the story for is that dear old lady on the platform."

"Oh!" Well, maybe Mother knew, but still—

The band stopped playing, now, and the big man in the chair got up and talked. He sounded just like the minister in church; so Doris didn't pay any attention to him. She kept watching the side of the platform to see if the other Alice wasn't coming in. But there wasn't a sign of her.

After a while the man sat down and the old lady in the brown silk dress got up. Everybody else stood up again and started to clap; so Doris clapped, too. The man helped the lady to the front; then he sat down and she stood there alone. She looked kind of scared, Doris thought. Her voice was awfully low and she said her words funny. Doris had to listen very carefully to understand her. She had never heard anyone talk quite like that before.

"A beautiful English accent," murmured Mother.

There wasn't a sound in the room. Everyone seemed to be holding their breath. Once the lady almost stopped, but then she started to talk again.

"Pay attention, dear." There were tears in Mother's eyes. Was she crying? Doris hadn't done anything. Maybe Mother had caught cold.

Santa Claus's brother took a great big handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose so loud that it sounded like a horn. Doris looked around to see if any one had noticed it, but everybody was watching the lady.

At last the lady stopped talking and the man helped her back to the chair. Everybody clapped again, more than ever this time. Doris thought they would never stop. But she clapped just as long as anyone else.

Another man got up to talk now. He talked like the minister, too. He said funny things because all the people laughed. He talked awfully long. Doris's toes began to

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itch; there was a queer little pain in her leg. She just had to stand up.

"Sit still, Doris." Mother pushed her back.

"Getting tired?" whispered Santa Claus's brother.

"It's a little long for her." Mother smiled sweetly at him.

"Want to see the White Rabbit?" he asked.

Doris nodded her head yes. Did he have a white rabbit hidden somewhere on him, like the man who did tricks?

Santa Claus's brother took a handkerchief from his pocket, a clean one, not the one he made the big noise with, and made a darling little rabbit out of it with white ears. He put his hand under it and made it jump right on Doris's lap. She just couldn't help squealing a little. She looked at Mother, but Mother only smiled.

"Not quite so loud," she whispered.

"Want to make one yourself?" asked Santa Claus's brother.

"Yes." Doris touched the rabbit gently with her finger.

Santa Claus's brother unfolded the handkerchief. "It's like this," he said. "Watch carefully."

After Doris had found out how to make the rabbit she had lots of fun playing with it, very quietly, of course, so Mother wouldn't be annoyed. She didn't even know that the man had sat down until she heard the girls singing. Then the ladies and the men walked off the platform while everybody stood up and clapped. But she was too busy playing with the handkerchief to clap this time.

"It's all over," said Mother. "Give the gentleman his handkerchief and thank him for being so kind to you."

"Thank you." Oh! She almost said "Santa Claus's brother". And that would have been awful, because maybe he wasn't his brother, after all.

"I know how it is, Madam. I have grandchildren of my own." He beamed at Mother.

"You enjoyed it, didn't you, Doris?" asked Mother on the way home. "You'll never forget it, will you?"

"No." Doris was thinking of the darling little rabbit.

Father was sitting in the living room when they went in the house. "Well, how was the original Alice?" he asked, throwing his newspaper on the floor.

"It was wonderful, wasn't it, Doris? I'll tell you all about it at dinner." Mother vanished into the kitchen to talk to Mary.

"Well, Duckie, what are you going to tell your children when you grow up?"

"I'm going to tell them—I'm going to tell them that—Father," Doris climbed on his lap, "has Santa Claus a brother in New York?"

"Mm. Yes, I believe he has. In fact I'm sure he has. Why?"

"Because I think he sat next to me today, and he showed me how to make a darling little rabbit out of a handkerchief. It can jump, too."

"Pooh! I know how to do that. Santa Claus's brother has nothing on me." He took a handkerchief with a red border from his pocket.

"Oh," chuckled Doris, "this rabbit will have red ears."

They were still playing with the darling little rabbit when Mother called them to dinner.

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PUBLISHERS AND PIRATES

by B. D. Cutler

NOTE.—*This article was accepted and put into type before the death a few weeks ago of John W. Lovell, the principal figure in the curious episode of American publishing which the article describes. In view of the ethical questions involved in Lovell's career it seems best to state that the author and "The Bookman" assumed that the article would come under Lovell's eyes.*

—THE EDITOR.

THE STORY of literary piracy in America is an old one, going back, for all that can be said to the contrary, to the earliest examples of printing and publishing in the Colonial period. It must be remembered that it was not until the time of Cooper and Irving that America really began to produce literature of its own; and even during the productive years of those two pioneers and, after their demise, extending into the so-called era of the "golden days", Britain continued to find America a literary dependent. It was necessary for American publishers to import reading matter—principally from England—in order to add numbers and prestige to their lists.

The system of importation might have worked out happily for publishers in both countries but for the fact that the American government recognized no international copyright law and at one time even went so far as to sponsor the appropriation of contemporary British literature by American publishers. In view of such stimulating encouragement it is to the credit of the early publishers that they did not always appropriate—or "pirate"—the British books they saw fit to introduce to these shores. A certain amount of ethics had crept into the American trade, in recognition of which no publisher was supposed to bring out a book by a British author which had already been issued under the imprint of a competitor. This arrangement was known as "trade courtesy" and as often as it was respected publishers were able to pay British authors in the form of "honorariums" or "courtesy payments". And for the most part "trade courtesy" was respected, so that it was only in those cases where publishers felt that sales did not justify payment of an honorarium that dissatisfaction was known. There were probably as many instances of payment as of non-payment, thus striking off an unhappy balance and giving the American publishing trade the complexity of a dual personality. Even so, Charles Dickens could look at the situation with humour and remark to one of the younger Harpers, "You are the son of the greatest pirate on earth".

But there rose up within the ranks a group of individuals who, perhaps, allowed themselves too much dignity by attaching the word "Publisher" to their names. They adhered to no standards and their policy was one of piracy and non-payment. They supplied themselves with the best of English literature by the simple device of pirating books already published by larger firms who

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may or may not have paid for the privilege. This was a new form of piracy, exhibiting the trickiness to which publishing and bookmaking could descend. It progressed so rapidly that more legitimate circles became alarmed when the whole depressing subject of the American publishing scene was ventilated by W. Clark Russell in the London *Athenæum*. The better publishers rushed to their own defense, and *The Critic* published their written testimony of the amounts they had paid out to British authors. The most enlightening of the testimonials came from the offices of Houghton, Mifflin. In a few brief sentences the Boston firm touched the keynote of the entire situation. Their statement read: "It is hardly worth our time any more to publish British and other foreign books, because the *Seaside* and other 'Libraries' immediately issue the same books in cheap paper-covered editions, thus rendering fair competition impossible".

For a brief spell the newspapers took up the question. *The Post* fastened the guilt of originating what they termed "new piracy" upon George Munro, publisher of the *Seaside Library*. *The Sun* pointed out that Munro was not the culprit and hinted that another publisher, then very active, was the inventor and schemer of schemes whereby "new piracy" became a potent force. *The Sun* did not go so far as to name its man, but it did accomplish, along with *The Post*, the identification of two different methods of piracy, the "new" and the "old". They held up to view the fact that the "old pirate" paid "honorariums" if he thought sales justified such a courtesy, while the "new pirate" made no pretence of paying anybody, but hijacked the literature of his older and more gentlemanly competitor.

The man *The Sun* hinted at but left unnamed was undoubtedly John W. Lovell. Oddly enough he was not the bold, bad pirate that circumstances and cursory research rather tend to make him seem. In 1878 he had left his home city, Montreal, and established himself in New York at 24 Bond Street. At first he occupied no more than desk space, being unable to afford a well-fitted office. He was, moreover, many thousands of dollars in debt because he had taken over the large obligations incurred by his father in a publishing venture at Rouses Point, New York. From 1882 to 1893 Lovell blazed a trail in the American publishing world and also extended his activities into England, allying his firm's name with those of the great British authors of the day. Kipling, Barrie, Doyle, Marie Corelli, Hall Caine and Rider Haggard were among the fifty or more British authors who agreed to publish under his aegis. He kept alive innumerable petty pirate concerns, enabling them to garner parasitical earnings from his own publishing programs. In 1890 he formed and became head of the massive United States Book Company which, from its very beginning, did more than hint at gaining monopoly control. By 1893 he was practically through, his firm in the hands of a receiver. Because of all this and principally because he was the central figure around which American literary piracy revolved after 1882, a more detailed consideration of the career of John W. Lovell will explain much that was important then and has both interest and significance now.

By the beginning of 1882 Lovell's business had grown enough to allow him to take offices at 14-16 Vesey Street. Here he began plans for a spring publishing program which was to be a turning point in piratical activity. Before 1882, when piracy was a minor evil, it was customary for many publishers to issue "Libraries" of popular novels in paper-covered volumes, rather like magazines.

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Among the most prominent publications of this type were Harper's *Franklin Square Library* and George Munro's *Seaside Library*. Each was to be found at bookshops and newsstands throughout the country, priced from ten to twenty-five cents. In addition to being manufactured in great numbers, which kept costs down, the "Libraries" were entered in the mail as second-class matter. This latter feature was the main reason why the retail price was maintained at a low level, and depended on the postal authorities' interpretation of what constituted a book. Books, or "bound volumes", were, according to the Post Office ruling, covered with cloth, leather or boards, and were sewn or stitched. They could, of course, be sent through the mail as first-class matter only, at a considerably greater cost than second-class material.

John W. Lovell was well versed in the legal aspects of publishing—as he had need to be. He conceived the idea of doing away with the magazine-like appearance of the library volume and presenting in its place a small, neat substitute, about the size of the ordinary duodecimo, paper-covered and held together by wire. Actually he was aiming at putting out a book which did not quite come under the Post Office's description of what a book was, and he hoped thereby to secure second-class privileges. Although several acquaintances who had his confidence told him that he was crazy and that the Post Office would surely classify his innovation as a book, Lovell went personally to the Postmaster. With what strained cordiality that official greeted his proposal is manifested in the decision that there was absolutely nothing the Department could do to hinder the project, the only requirement being that Lovell present, before publication, a list of no less than two hundred subscribers to his *Library*.

The sod had hardly begun to settle over the grave of Longfellow when, in April, 1882, Lovell issued *Hyperion*, the poet's second published work. In the place accorded it by Lovell it was distinguished by being Vol. 1, No. 1, of *Lovell's Library*, a new weekly series of paper-covered books which, after all, were not quite books. The recent death of the author made the inaugural title of the new library seem a timely bit of publishing, though Houghton, Mifflin of Boston had notified the bookselling world that Lovell had infringed upon their copyright. But, though perhaps a trifle careless of his moral obligations, Lovell had made sure of his legal standing, and he won the case when it came up before a magistrate. The copyright of forty-two years' duration on the first edition of *Hyperion*, published in 1839, had expired, and the copyright that Houghton, Mifflin held was on a revised edition brought out in 1845. Lovell claimed to have printed from the original text, which he had a perfect right to do, since with the lapse of copyright the book had become anybody's property.

Lovell's Library was an immediate success and, except for desultory court skirmishes which Lovell had a genius for winning, it gained the approval of most of the trade. The second-class mailing scheme appealed to other publishers, with the result that similar ventures began to spring up over night, and numerous new publishers—or pirates—appeared on the scene. Most of them published nothing else.

The situation soon became very complicated, and in fact a decided nuisance. Everybody cribbed from everybody else, until finally it became necessary for the cribbers to reach an understanding among themselves. They began to rent or lend plates to one another, and sometimes the sale of sheets took place. At any rate everybody had a hand in, as can be seen in those instances where the

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books are now sought by collectors: it is often possible to trace the line of piratical progress from the original publisher through ten or twenty different "houses", all using the same plates or sheets. The puzzle consists sometimes in determining the original publisher.

Another practice which soon made itself obnoxious, and which had much to do with the adoption of the Copyright Bill of 1891 and its subsequent amendments, was the habit each publisher had of issuing a popular book in several different "Libraries," using, in most cases, the same sheets throughout and changing only the covers. Kipling, Barrie, Doyle and Haggard are shining examples of this literary malpractice. Munro, for instance, published Barrie's *When a Man's Single* in the *Seaside Library*, in *Munro's Library of Popular Novels*, and in the *Majestic Series*. And when it is considered that the juggling of plates and sheets of this title alone caused it to pass through the hands of, at one time or another, fourteen different pirates, some idea of the American publishing scene in those days can be gained.

In the fall of 1888 John W. Lovell started preparations for a new program which was, beneath its surface benevolence, a direct attempt at monopoly. The furious competition resulting from his *Library* made it obvious to a man of Lovell's sense that the future of piracy was anything but optimistic. No government could continue to uphold the legalized theft of foreign property without ultimately impairing its diplomatic relationships. The question of copyright was taking a serious turn; Congress was lending a suddenly alert ear to the importunities of reputable American publishers who wanted the rights of foreign authors respected in America. And John W. Lovell, knowing well the power of generosity, continued his plans for the new program which was eventually to affiliate him with some fifty of the best British authors.

Lovell entrusted one of his editors, Wolcott Balestier, with the task of being his representative in London. Balestier was given a free hand as to the number and identity of the authors to be approached. He was given full leeway as to the money he chose to advance in securing exclusive American rights for the books of those authors. Thus, when an international copyright law was passed by Congress, as it shortly must be, Lovell hoped through his timely generosity to have entered into agreements with the cream of the British literati. After the passage of the copyright bill he would be able and, of course, only too willing to publish their books on a royalty basis.

Wolcott, or more properly, Charles Wolcott Balestier seems to have been singularly fitted for the job he had to perform. Lovell, it is true, had invested him with a Midas-like touch, and this undoubtedly lightened whatever burden might have been attached to dispensing good American dollars to a group of British authors who had grown accustomed to writing gratis for an avid American public. But Balestier was a personage in his own right and not merely a publisher's representative. In a land that prided itself on its traditional breeding, Balestier seems to have stood forth as a paramount example of the correct blending of sociability with cultural restraint. He was formal, but never ceremonious; he was jovial, but never fell into boisterous display. He was a good conversationalist, and had the rare gift of reflecting his companion's personality while losing none of his own strength of character. He was perhaps all the more unusual because he was only twenty-six years old and had managed somehow to acquire the poise and culture of a cosmopolitan.

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Balestier, for his own sake, became an immediate success in London's literary and artistic circles. Shortly after his arrival Edmund Gosse became his close friend and adviser. Whistler found Balestier a good companion and spoke of him as "Amazin'". More difficult of access, perhaps, was Henry James, but in the introduction to Balestier's posthumously published book of short stories, *The Average Woman,* he, just as characteristically as Whistler, wrote of him as having been "an apparition essentially salient". Rudyard Kipling, certainly not the most sociable of men, became Balestier's warmest friend, with the result that the two collaborated in the writing of *The Naulahka*, which ran serially in the *Century* and was published in book form after Balestier's death.

It was Edmund Gosse who first told, in his book *Portraits and Sketches*, how Balestier acquired an admiration for Kipling and how he was successful in introducing that author to America. In his capacity as Lovell's representative, Balestier had taken an office at 2 Dean's Yard, a snug little nook in the shadow of Westminster Abbey. It was while calling at his friend's office one day that it occurred to Gosse to recommend several books by Kipling who, at that time, had gained but little of his later recognition.

"Kipling?" Balestier questioned. "Kipling, do you say? What's its real name? Is it a man or a woman?"

"You will find", Gosse replied, "that you will not be allowed to go on talking about him that way. He is going to become one of our greatest writers."

"Pooh! pooh!" Balestier smiled. "Now you are shouting."

Gosse, "somewhat nettled", went away, but took care before leaving to deposit on Balestier's desk several of the frail Indian editions of Kipling's books. A few days later, when he again called at the office he found Balestier reading, with the utmost attentiveness, *Plain Tales from the Hills*. Apparently he had solved whatever problems of gender beset him, and his enthusiasm was boundless. Such is the first half of the story.

The rest we learn from Frank Lovell, who filled an executive position in his brother's firm, which was by this time occupying an entire building at 150 Worth Street, at the corner of Mission Place. As Frank entered the office one morning, John greeted him by waving a cablegram conspicuous mostly for its inordinate length. "I have here", John announced, "a cablegram from Wolcott. Did you ever hear of Rudyard Kipling?"

Frank eyed his brother. "Nope," he said. "Why?"

"Wolcott seems to have a high opinion of him. He says for me to send twenty-five hundred dollars to secure exclusive American rights to some of Kipling's books." John scanned the message. At length he said, "What do you think?"

"Send him the money," said Frank. "What do you suppose he went to the expense of that cable for?"

"Oh, he always does that." John's tone was a bit rueful. "And this time he wants a lot of money. And I never heard of Rudyard Kipling."

Frank's response was immediate. "Sure it's a lot of money", he agreed. "Sure you never heard of him. What the hell of it? Wolcott's heard of him. Ain't that what you sent him to London for?"

Frank Lovell's manner of expressing himself undoubtedly had a great deal to do with making up his brother's mind. Although John W. Lovell was the actual publisher, *Plain Tales from the Hills* was issued under the imprint of Frank F. Lovell in January, 1890, and introduced Rudyard Kipling to

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American readers only a short while after John Lovell had questioned the selective ability of Balestier who had, in turn, hesitated before the recommendation of Gosse.

When *Plain Tales from the Hills* was published, John W. Lovell was occupying a near-exalted position in the publishing world. The manner in which the public accepted the book foretold a similar success for those to follow. At the same time agitation in Washington for the adoption of international copyright was increasing, and Lovell, called to the Capitol, conceived it his duty when questioned, to admit that foreigners ought to be protected in America and paid on a royalty basis. In the meantime, Balestier continued his work, making agreements with countless British authors and failing only in his interview with William Black, who, out of gratitude, stoutly refused to leave the Harpers. Balestier gave parties and teas over which his sister Caroline presided and to which the British literati flocked.

Viewing the trend of events from his office in New York, John W. Lovell began to look forward to the realization of another—and probably his greatest—ambition. The time was ripe, and being a man of action, he immediately started to carry out his plans. He mortgaged his electrotype and stereotype plates for the unbelievable sum of one million dollars to Wash Conners, whose connection with Jay Gould was well known. Further fortified by the backing of several other moneyed men, with over a million in resources and unlimited credit, he organized in July, 1890, the United States Book Company. In connection with the United States Book Company there were also five subsidiary firms, namely: The National Publishing Company, the International Publishing Company, the Empire Publishing Company (managed by Frank Lovell), the Hovendon Company, and the Seaside Publishing Company. The first four firms came into being with the organization of the United States Book Company. But the Seaside Publishing Company had been a going concern for a number of years. Lovell did not purchase it outright but took it over on option, Frank F. Lovell delivering the first payment in cash, personally, because he was curious to ascertain if Norman Munro would make good his threat to punch him in the nose on sight. Frank delivered the money and Norman accepted it, and nothing of a bellicose nature passed between them. But when the time came due, the United States Book Company failed to exercise its option, and ownership of the Seaside Company remained with the Munros. In 1891 the Lovell, Coryell Company was formed, probably to fill up the gap occasioned by the loss of the Seaside Company.

John W. Lovell had a curious method of operating his chain system. The only actual publishing firms were the United States Book Company and the Lovell, Coryell Company; the others were no more than distributing centers. Sheets were delivered to the subsidiaries and blank spaces were left on the title pages for the insertion of the respective imprints. With each delivery of sheets the manager of the subsidiary made out a note to the United States Book Company, which Lovell discounted at the bank.

In March, 1891, the International Copyright Bill was passed by Congress. The act was received with universal approval, and reputable American publishers acknowledged congratulations from abroad with the joy of reformed sinners. It appeared that piracy had at last been successfully dealt with and that the end of wholesale racketeering would result in long years of pleasant international relationships. Of those publishers who looked forward to a rosy future, John W. Lovell in

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particular regarded the new copyright bill with satisfaction and was the only one who felt actually prepared for it.

But the applause from abroad died down quickly and the old feeling of dissatisfaction renewed itself. Piracy had not been defeated. A clause in the copyright bill stipulated that in order to secure American rights on a foreign book the book must be published simultaneously here and abroad. Many a pirate crawled through this loophole to about ten more years of active life.

The word "simultaneous" in the copyright bill was the anti-climax of Lovell's career. Instead of making him one of the foremost publishers of the land, the act rang the death-knell upon his ambition to corner the British fiction market. He could not, in view of unchanged conditions, continue to pay out large sums to British authors. And when the courts were reduced, in testing their decisions on infringement cases, to a problem of determining the exact hour of publication in America and in a foreign country, it became impossible for Lovell to even think of making advance payments for outright purchases.

Although thwarted in his plans by the wording of the copyright bill, Lovell seems to have continued to entertain some idea of expanding. Balestier in the course of executing his social and commercial obligations in London had made the acquaintance of William Heinemann. Heinemann proposed that Balestier become associated with him in the publication of the *English Library* on the Continent in competition with Baron Tauchnitz. Balestier recommended the idea to Lovell, and the American publisher advanced his representative five thousand dollars as the latter's share in the partnership. Balestier forthwith departed for Leipzig to open offices. He had been there only a few days when he went to Dresden where he contracted a fever; and, because his health was already impaired by overwork, he failed to respond to treatment. He died on December 6, 1891, a week before his thirtieth birthday.

The death of Wolcott Balestier was a blow to his friends in England and America, and it was a sad prelude to the marriage of Rudyard Kipling and Caroline Balestier. Kipling was in Lahore for the Christmas holidays when he received news of Balestier's death and he immediately proceeded to London, where he joined Mrs. Balestier and her two daughters, Josephine and Caroline. On the afternoon of January 18, 1892, Kipling and Caroline Balestier were married quietly in the chapel of All Souls' Church, Langham Place, London. Henry James gave the bride away in the presence of only nine guests.

Not the least affected by Balestier's passing were John and Frank Lovell, each of whom regarded him with real affection. It was for the purpose of offering both condolences and felicitations that John went to call on Kipling and his bride on the evening of their arrival in New York on February 11, 1892. The bride, whom he had known for a number of years, greeted him with friendliness and warmth. But his reception by the bridegroom was anything but cordial. Kipling greeted him with a curt "How do you do?" and departed to a far corner of the room, where he apparently gave himself over to deep thought. He said not another word during the course of the evening, and what conversation took place was between Lovell and his more amiable hostess. It was not until the visitor made ready to go that he once more heard the voice of the poet who, this time, said "Good-night". But nevertheless Lovell went away with the impression, which has endured to this day, that "Mr. Kipling was not a very sociable man".

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It was probably the excessive pirating of his books that caused Kipling to leave Lovell and go over to Macmillan. The author, of course, could not be expected to understand the arrangement under which the United States Book Company and its subsidiaries worked. Quite possibly he looked upon the arrangement as a kind of self-piracy and it was natural that he failed to endorse a policy where the gain was so one-sided. Furthermore, Kipling undoubtedly had no conception of the system that compelled a publisher to rent, lend, or sell plates or sheets as a means of preventing pirate firms from issuing a competing edition of a book within forty-eight hours of its original appearance. This very probably seemed like aiding and abetting an evil cause. But it was the scheme of things, and Lovell could not help it. He was caught in a piratical morass out of which, because of the failure of the copyright bill, there was no escape. He had to continue with his publishing, and, because he had purchased the rights to innumerable books by British authors, he had not only to endure piracy, but to aid it. If it was galling to Kipling to see his books pirated and subjected to textural alterations and changes in title, it was certainly just as galling to Lovell to realize that he was the hub about which nearly all of the piratical system revolved.

Early in 1892 it became evident to the trade and to stockholders that the affairs of the United States Book Company were in bad shape. Internal dissension, lack of organization and improper supervision were plunging the firm into complications from which it could not be delivered. In March, 1893, Charles M. Gould was called in as receiver, and shortly after his advent John W. Lovell withdrew and never again became prominent in publishing. The firm that he had founded continued to do business under the management of the receiver, but ran itself further and further into difficulties. In 1896 creditors were induced to accept stock in a new firm and the company was reorganized under the name of the American Publishers' Corporation with offices at 610-618 Sixth Avenue. The records of the old company mysteriously disappeared, and it was rumoured that they had been destroyed by fire. The American Publishers' Corporation remained active for two or three years and then it, too, went out of existence.

It would be useless to endeavour to analyze the motives behind John W. Lovell's many plans. His actions were always swift and strategic, and they speak pretty much for themselves. He was certainly not the force for evil, the "pirate chief", that he has upon occasion been depicted. He was no less honourable than his contemporaries, and was considerably more honourable than the majority of them. The introduction of *Lovell's Library*, successfully entered as second-class matter, had a rather disastrous effect on the reputation of the American publishing profession. But the fact that other firms started "Libraries" and entered them as second-class matter was no fault of Lovell's; and if his imitators became a greater nuisance than ever before he was doubtless as inconvenienced by their methods as anyone else. The effects of the copyright bill would seem to bear out this statement. Lovell was the cause of excessive piracy only inasmuch as he perfected a plan which unfortunately turned out to be as useful to his competitors as it was to himself. The blame for piracy cannot be placed at the door of any single individual connected with publishing at that time; but if the blame has to be placed somewhere, then the accusing finger must be directed at the United States government which respected the personal rights of none but Americans.

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

THEATRICAL THERAPY

by Francis Fergusson

THINKING over the serious shows of the season, and especially the three which I am discussing this time, I am struck with the fact that they all are Utopian. Our serious playwrights, if they are nice and avoid sensationalism for its own sake, are more like optimistic family doctors, sure everything will turn out all right, than like writers of comedies, tragedies, histories or pastorals. The Elizabethans told a good story, interspersed with lyrical reflections on human destiny, which were sometimes absurd and sometimes profound; Congreve or Goldsmith would laugh or smile at perennial human folly. But for us neither folly nor tragedy is in the nature of things—they are frailties which would be cured by reading the right psychologists or belonging to the right class or party. Does the wife or the husband run back to his parents for protection?—"Get rid of that mother-fixation," says the dramatist. Does Clytemnestra murder Agamemnon?—"Well, he was pretty repressed, and Clytemnestra wasn't getting what she needed from marriage," replies Mr. O'Neill. "Look at the South Sea Islanders." Do the strong bully the weak, as they have always done, do those in power abuse their power, and those not in power suffer for it?—"Become class-conscious," say the Communists. "Marx and Lenin will change all that."

The effect of all this is to make you feel that you are in Limbo, neither alive nor dead; that human life is no nearer than Samoa or the Nevsky Prospekt. The plays you see are about people who, in the last act, wake up and say: "No, this is not it—that poor fellow can't speak Another Language; Ed Martin may be hanged, but change the city administration and such accidents won't occur; that young man has been badly brought up and doesn't understand Love". The implication is that the playwright and the audience, nodding to each other in consultation over the sick-bed, are beyond human ills, and omniscient. I suppose this is the fault of the audience as much as of the playwright. We like to think that the other fellow is getting away with it, even if we aren't; that our prophets, the newspaper sages who run columns on diet or marriage, know everything. Probably we are too timid to weep at the irremediable.

Another Language

Miss Rose Franken's play is an intelligent and rather therapeutic study of family life. It has been very well directed and cast by the producer, Mr. Arthur Beckhard, and Mr. Cleon Throckmorton has given it the proper accurate realistic settings. The story is about the struggle between Stella Hallam (Dorothy Stickney) and the family of her husband, Victor Hallam (Glenn Anders). We learn that Mrs. Hallam, Victor's mother (Margaret Wycherly), is still trying to boss and possess her four married sons. Every Tuesday they spend the evening with the old

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folks, bringing their wives and children. Now the Hallam sons are respectable citizens, little pillars of the community; they are good providers, they never run after women. But they all—except Victor—have settled down to a disillusioned, bickering relation with their wives, with much intimacy and no dignity. The excellent cast takes great delight in presenting a group picture of such a family, with its violent little feuds, its chicken salad, its tight shoes, its corseted fat, its rather mean practical jokes, and its self-righteous mutual bullying. They are so successful that the evening in the Hallam dining-room is as boring as a whole summer in Asbury Park. But Stella speaks another language; she wants more from life than the Hallams—she wants her husband's love, she wants to study art, she wants a drawing-room with candles, she wants to be free of old Mrs. Hallam—she wants a lot.

The first thing that happens is that her nephew, Jerry Hallam (John Beal) falls calfishly in love with her. He likes art, too, goes to the exhibitions, and speaks her language. Stella likes him, too. I won't try to tell you in any detail what happens then; it is enough to report that the affair with Jerry precipitates a crisis in the family; that Stella wins her freedom, saves young Jerry's idealism, and gives her husband Victor a shaking. Victor, in the seven years of his marriage has reverted to the family pattern. But Stella opens his eyes, teaches him to appreciate her and to say "no" to his mamma.

The best thing about this play is its humour, especially its deft caricatures of the too-laughing and squabbling Hallams. The worst thing about it is its lurking seriousness, not to say sentimentality. Stella is all highness and fineness, the Hallams all pettiness and vulgarity. All of the men are mere children—the Hallam married sons spoiled children and bullies; Jerry an abused, sensitive child with "idealism". Victor is halfway between, and Stella is trying to make him over in the image of his nephew. In order to get a real understanding and acceptance of a situation of this kind we should have to see what became of Stella in art school, and what she and Jerry saw when they went to the exhibitions. If you go to exhibitions you will remember that they offer no panacea. But the diagnostician sees the tyranny only in the light of an unrealized aspiration to escape. Perhaps that is why the *Frauenzimmer* who witnessed it on the damp, hot night when I was there gave it their unqualified approval, fanning and waving and smiling at each other across the balcony. *That*, they could agree with Miss Franken, is not the life, certainly.

A Thousand Summers

Swallow, my sister, oh sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?

This quotation from Swinburne, placed at the head of the program, gives the title and mood of Miss Jane Cowl's new play. Tears in the throat and sinus, sobs swallowed and swallows sobbing: how badly the young are brought up! Neil Barton, aged twenty-one (Franchot Tone) is spending a rainy couple of weeks at an inn in the Lake Country, with his aunt (Josephine Hull) and his uncle (Thomas Findlay). The aunt and uncle are the stock middle-aged middle-western American couple abroad; can't quite place Wordsworth; worried about Neil and the office; hearts of gold. Neil, I needn't tell you, is a fine, clean chap, but sad, feeling the mysterious approach of love. And what should he do but fall for Sheila Pennington (Jane Cowl), a beautiful lady with a beauti-

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ful gown and a beautiful voice, fifteen years older than he, wise and experienced? She feels it coming on, but what to do? She may wring her hands, she may press her fevered brow (as Miss Cowl always does in a quandary), she may pace back and forth with quick steps. But the solution won't come, not the solution Sheila wants. And all the time Neil, with his nice eyes and his nice tie and his new sweater—but sad. The trouble is, Auntie has smelt danger too, and has made Sheila promise not to ruin our Neil, and Sheila has promised, though against her better judgment. Well, sure enough, the barmaid steps in and takes Neil, and the next morning he walks in with his hair all mussed, glummer than ever, having discovered that love is sordid, and not a beautiful thing at all. It looks pretty black for Neil, until Sheila at last decides what she will do: she will follow him to Paris, beautiful voice, beautiful gown and all, and make things right about love. So we are relieved as the curtain goes down—the barmaid was only a bad dream that victimized dear Neil, and in *Paris* he shall be made happy!

This play is far better cast and directed by Mr. Shepard Traube than it deserves, and Mr. Oenslager has lavished a very convincing setting of a little English inn upon it. Miss Mary Newnham-Davis does excellently with the difficult part of Tessie the barmaid who so forcibly initiates Neil. And of course Miss Cowl and Mr. Tone are just right for their parts. I never believe in Miss Cowl's emotions, but she knows how to bring the perfumery, the atmosphere, the presence demanded by a part like this. And Mr. Tone, with his glum scowl, his strangulated hysterics just under the surface, his boyish grin, rarely used but all the brighter when it comes, and his husky, innocent American voice, is the perfect patient for the solicitous playwrights, the sympathetic diagnosticians. I hope one of them will at length discover a cure for the unfortunate young men that Mr. Tone has shown us in the last few years —victims of unemployment, of heredity, of stupidity, of "conditions".

This is more horrible: that the darling egg
Of the chosen people hatch a creature
Of noblest mind and powerful leg
That cannot fathom nor perform his nature—

says Mr. John Crowe Ransom. Our playwrights assure us that with the advance in eugenics, child psychology or economic planning, this problem will disappear. Meanwhile it hangs like a pall over Times Square, and we are repeatedly invited to sniffle at it, so to say, provisionally.

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

About Blue-Stockings and Their Albums

London, April.

"I always thought a tinge of blue
Improved a charming woman's stocking."

So wrote Richard Monckton Milnes. But the same thought had occurred to previous men of letters, back to surly, burly Dr. Johnson a century before. There seems to be something of a mystery about the beginnings of the Blue-Stockings—which is appropriate after all. The Oxford Dictionary solemnly attributes them to Mrs. Montagu and her circle (*circa* 1750). Boswell puts them onto a *Mr.* Stillingfleet—which is a pity, although not so scandalous as might seem to this trousered age. Without pursuing the matter further, it may be recalled that Dr. Johnson was "prevailed with" to enter the circles of the Blue-Stockings, and "did not think himself too grave even for the lively Countess of Corke, who used to have the finest *bit of blue* [the italics are Bozzy's] at the house of her mother, Lady Galway".

The Blue-Stockings were paired. There were those who gathered at Mrs. Montagu's various houses to talk on literature instead of playing cards; and there were those who made literature their life's work, and not an after-dinner (5 p. m.) recreation. The latter by their works we know (but only occasionally read). The former are now a tradition which is represented by fragrant relics. These relics are most frequently in the shape of albums which have such a fascination for many bookmen and collectors.

There are three kinds of albums. Earliest come those filled with poems by various hands and interspersed with dainty vignettes and delicate water-colours. These are a snare and a delusion to inexperienced collectors or optimistic bargain-hunters, who—misled by the different contemporary handwritings and signatures—conclude that Byron, Scott, Thomas Moore, and others of the glorious bards thus kindly "obliged" the album's owner. Without the slightest reflection on the dear friends who simply *had* to write something in darling Isabella's album, it must be said that the results are sometimes remarkably like the real thing, which—as experts on old autographs know—are very much scarcer.

There are many "wrong" albums about in America and Britain. This is why I have made them the subject of an End-Paper. It is sad to label them "wrong" because they

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are often charming, and because originally they were innocently designed. But they have so often been taken, or passed off by the unscrupulous, for what they are not, that a word of warning is timely. As a fact, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, there ought not to be any deception. An album containing verses, in different contemporary writings, of a number of famous authors should be suspect at once. Anyone familiar with old holographs would immediately recognize whether they were or were not by the hands of the authors whose verses are copied. And if the would-be buyer is not an expert on holographs he should require to be satisfied as to the history of the book and the identity of the owner so honoured as to gather the originally written contributions of so many celebrities. Generous as authors may have been individually to their various friends, there are comparatively few people in each age able or willing to command the generosity of a considerable number of great writers. In short, if the owners can be identified as ladies who moved in the right circles and were in the habit of meeting celebrated authors, then the first suspicion is removed.

If it were only a question of distinguishing between the "wrong" album, as originally (and innocently) filled with copies in different handwritings of famous lines, and the "right" one containing genuine manuscripts, these notes might seem to belabour the point. But learning what we have of the literary forger, there is always the possibility that he has subsequently become the possessor of, say, Louisa's album, and (uninvited) put in it his undesired contribution over some celebrity's name. This is another kind of Album-to-avoid. I have only to add that no reputable second-hand bookseller would offer a "wrong" album for anything other than it is. That dear bargain is more often picked up in the unlikely place or from the unexpected person. Incidentally, although I have given this warning against the "wrong" album, many collectors find pleasure in them for what they are. With their frequently beautiful specimens of handwriting, exquisite decorations, and other feeling adornments, they are pleasant and modest achievements of some fine "bits of blue".

The next development of the album was that the contributors, possibly anxious to emulate the growing number of professional women writers, filled its pages with their own poetry and prose. No risks here! The crudeness of the contributions, apart from the unfamiliarity of the signatures (complete with triumphant flourish), permits of no deception, even of the greenest and most gullible bargain-hunter. It seems, too, as if Culture was ceasing to keep up with old Time. Gone is much of the elegance of the penmanship and of the vignettes, with their cherubs in allegorical pensiveness. Later, come the albums filled with autograph letters. The original collectors who made these albums sacrificed their individuality in their hero- (and heroine-) worship. But to the credit account goes the fact that frequently they have been the means of preserving what in loose manuscripts might have been destroyed—to our great loss. In these albums many a letter has been found which throws light on an immortal author. Not all albums come into these three groups, which in my experience are the classifications of their development. Whether belonging to one of these three classes or to a more mixed variety they are the relics of the leisure hours of our gentle ancestors, and will often yield a curious interest as we linger over them. But beware of the old album with original contributions by famous men.

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WHAT IS A "FIRST EDITION"?

My own definition is: "The first printing of a book". Just that—nothing more. But Mr. Gilbert H. Fabes, in his third *Modern First Editions: Points and Values* (W. & G. Foyle, London. 15/-) evidently thinks there is a lot more in it than that. The definition (which the compiler quotes) by Viscount Esher, one of our book-collectors, is: "The first edition of a book is its first appearance in print wherever it may have been published"—which amounts to the same as mine, only longer. But no! Mr. Fabes will have it that there is a mystery; and he concludes nearly three pages on the subject with the extraordinarily disappointing remark: "Here the question must remain unanswered".

If it is not embarrassing (and no one would wish to embarrass a bookseller whose bookishness has won him many friends), I invite Mr. Fabes to answer the question *here* in these pages, since it "must remain unanswered" *there* in his. And if he can show me that a first edition is anything other than the first printing of a book, I shall be prepared to admit that black is white, and that I walk better on my head than on my feet.

The same books published in America and England about the same time are frequently causes of dispute. Herman Melville wrote *White Jacket* in New York City during the summer of 1849; and in the November of that year, while in London, he sold publication rights to Richard Bentley, whose first edition in the January following is recorded by his bibliographer, Michael Sadleir, as pre-dating the American first edition. Again, Vincent Starrett, the bibliographer of Ambrose Bierce, gives the first edition of that author's earliest work *The Fiend's Delight* (1872) as the one published in London by the notorious John Camden Hotten "in spite of misleading claims by booksellers" in favour of the American.

Mr. Fabes also cites some cases: "The first edition of *The Forsyte Saga* was published in America, but English collectors—and American collectors, too—ignore the American first edition. The first edition of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published a few days earlier in England than in America, but whereas the American edition fetches a very high price, the English actual first edition is practically ignored". Sentiment may play a part in the acceptance of such inconsistencies as those mentioned by Mr. Fabes, for there is an appropriateness in a famous book being first published in the author's own country. In other exceptions, business also plays a part, it must be added. But sentiment or business apart, you cannot get away from the fact that a first edition is its first printing. Perhaps Mr. Fabes will call in evidence the Biblical assurance that the first shall be last. But I won't anticipate his line of argument.

"POINTS"

Some of Mr. Fabes's "points" are useful. For example, of Thomas Hardy's *A Laodicean; or, The Castle of the De Stancys* (1881), he says there is a very rare and early issue of the first edition with the word "or" missing from the half-title. He adds that very few copies of the earliest issue are known; and estimates the value of the first issue as $750; and of the second issue as $75. There is no mention of another issue, although he implies that there are more than two.

But I must confess that some of these "points" remind me of the geometrical definition of our school-days, that "a point has no magnitude, but position only". As witness the "point" about Hardy's *The Woodlanders*

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(1887): "It is important that the first edition of this item should have one leaf of advertisements at the end of volume one; and for the purpose of this guide, the issue with the advertisement leaf is given as the first issue". But why? And again, why for "this guide"? For somebody else's purpose the issue without the advertisement may be the first issue. If Mr. Fabes pronounces judgment on such a fine point he should be prepared to give his reasoning.

There are other "points" in the book which are as geometrical as that of *The Woodlanders*. The difference between the first and second issues of the first edition of Hugh Walpole's *The Green Mirror* (1918) is merely that in the former the three leaves of advertisements are dated 31.8.17; and in the latter, 9.1.18. There is something here. But it happens that some of our most eminent bibliographers deny that attached advertisement leaves are part of the individual book at all; and that in any case their use is so hazardous as to be often unreliable.

The Historic Ten Years in Book-Collecting

The Fall in Prices—Resentment and Pessimism—A Protest—America's Part—Collectors in Two Camps

The fall in the prices of so many books and manuscripts has been the subject of considerable comment of late on both sides of the Atlantic. Much of it—on this side, at least—seems to me to be hasty and unduly pessimistic. Some of the references to what is called the "peak" period of three years ago have an underlying note that almost verges on resentment. This may be accidental; but it is none the less to be deplored. Mr. Gilbert H. Fabes, of Foyles (in a book noticed above) writes that "the great ramp in book prices died with the Wall Street totter"; and he further says: "It is possible to say at once that book-collecting will remain with us, as it has done for several hundred years". Dear me! It is also possible to say that the sun and moon will remain with us, as they have done for quite a long while. Then in the *Times Literary Supplement* appears this comment: "The truth is that the enormous sums paid for books three years ago were paid on behalf of American collectors—and very often collectors who, following a fashion, had little real knowledge of what they were buying".

Admittedly, after the Great War rare-book and manuscript prices soared enormously and, for good bookmen of small means, alarmingly. But although Americans were the most extensive buyers, the high prices were paid also by British collectors. Nor were they paid for the mere whim of writing out big cheques. The truth equally is that after the war money was plentiful; the demand for rare books and MSS grew suddenly both in America and Britain—part of it from those who had not been collectors hitherto—and with the new competition came the soaring figures.

For instance, you had a genuine and well-informed American collector—say, Mr. A—who decided that it was time he had a nice copy of Burns's *Poems* (1st Kilmarnock edition) on his shelves. Then another American collector, Mr. B, having unexpectedly made a lot of money and seeing the new (and often misleading) publicity given in the popular Press to "this Book-Collecting game", ascertains that the Kilmarnock Burns is a book worth having and decides to get it. And Mr. C, one of the comparatively fewer Englishmen who had made money, also wants a Kilmarnock Burns. Could anything other than high prices result from

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such competition? If anyone is to be blamed (since there appears to be a desire to blame someone) who is it to be? The individual collector? Or the auctioneer? Or the bookseller who acted as agent? Or President Harding? Or Mr. Lloyd George? Or (*in extremis*) the former Kaiser? I really don't know. Perhaps the critics will say.

Why rail now at what was due to an accidental and (as we shall see) very remarkable combination of circumstances? There was the case of the late Mr. Henry Clay Folger, who years ago was sneered at by the ill-informed because he was hoarding Shakespeare Folios and Quartos—"cornering the market" was one absurd gibe. Money was no object to Mr. Folger: he was working to a great plan. But will it be maintained that even he would not have preferred to buy more cheaply? There were those who competed with him, and so required him to pay "enormous sums". What of them? There is no need to drive the point home. Criticism on this head recoils heavily upon the critics. Mr. Folger carried out his great plan magnificently, as we have seen. Incidentally, he often exercised his own judgment as to prices with notable shrewdness.

The memorable Ten Years after the war has, I think, never been equalled in history for the number of rarities that came into the market. America, always seeking to get the best and rarest, secured the greater part of the treasures made available by the upheaval and (as I shall show) by the new enterprise of Bibliographical science.

As I have emphasized more than once in these pages, it is doubtful whether America's achievement, during the Ten Years, in acquiring literary and art treasures is fully appreciated. In making these acquisitions, she was only doing what Britain did after the Napoleonic Wars in regard to similar Continental treasures. With this difference: that the former, having more ground to make up, spent more lavishly. She seized her chance to secure a goodly share of rare and beautiful things. History will applaud her for the enterprise—just as there are a few longer-sighted British scholars and experts who maintain that, with exceptions here and there, Britain could well spare what America gained and paid good cash for; and that the exchange will bring forth its fair fruit in due season.

It will be seen that so far I have treated the subject rather on the wider grounds of national interests. At that I would prefer to leave it. But there were other causes that brought about the surprising events of the Ten Years and that have led to the present lines of criticism. In the old days—prior to the beginning of this century—it may be said generally that collectors and builders of libraries acquired their books either for their pleasure or for scholarship, or for both. The idea of buying book rarities as an investment if it existed at all was but a very minor consideration. When wealth became more widely distributed, and especially after the Great War, there entered into the collecting world buyers of books and manuscripts almost solely as investments. Their case is not a pleasant one to argue.

The collector who acquires books and manuscripts for pleasure or study has his recompense regardless of prices. The investor or speculator pure and simple has no such recompense. Thus when a sudden slump occurs—even if it is only temporary—he expresses his dissatisfaction. And I suspect that it is partly his dissatisfaction which has led to the present trend of comment. It must

(Continued on page ix, rear advertising section.)

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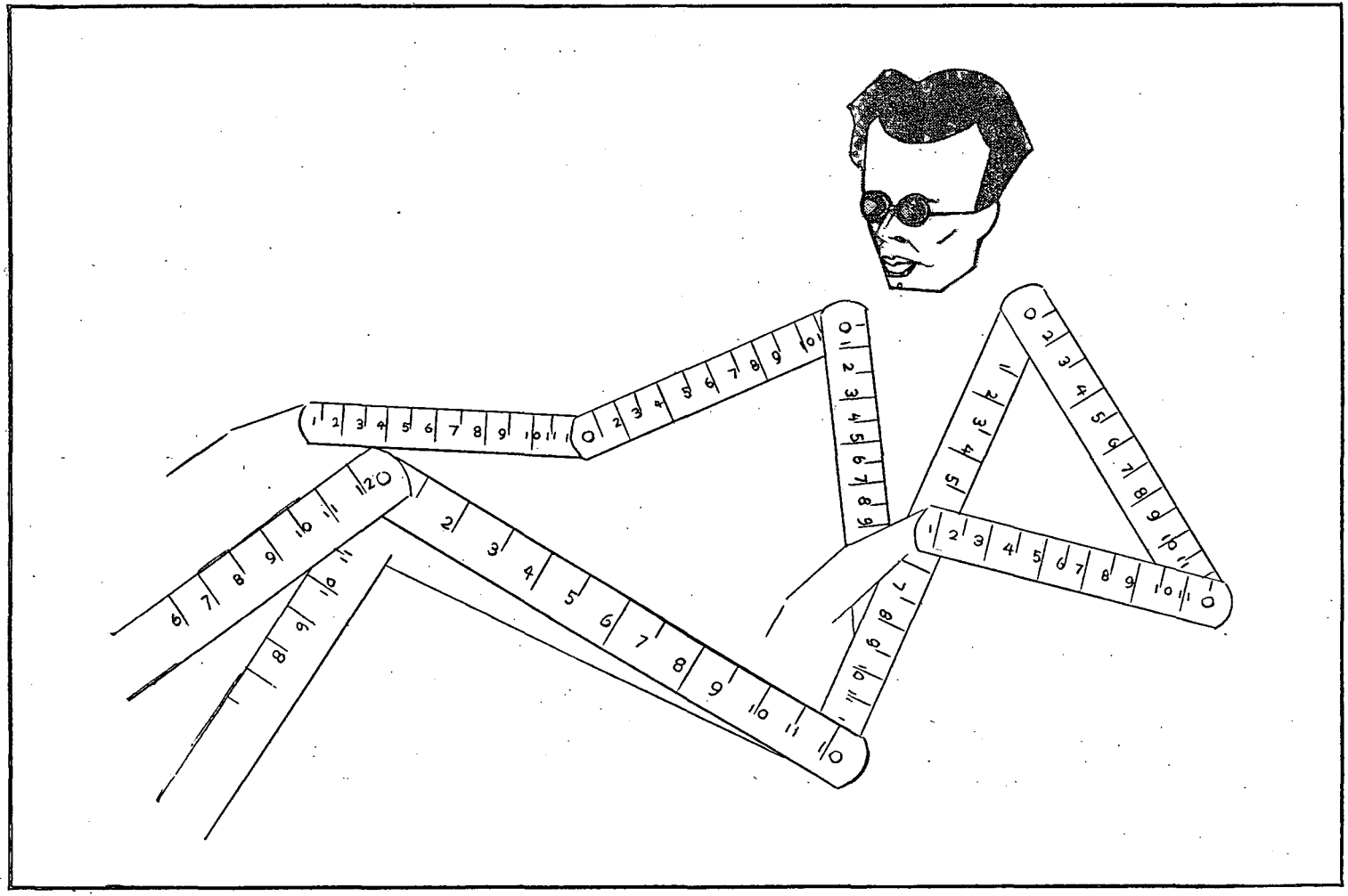

ALDOUS HUXLEY
Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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THE NEW BOOKS

BANANA GOLD *by Carleton Beals* (LIPPINCOTT. $3.00)

"BANANAS", the President of Guatemala remarked to Mr. Beals, "are the yellow gold of Guatemala." The remark evidently suggested the title of Mr. Beals's book, but the title gives no accurate indication of what the book itself contains. There are a few rather brief references to the banana industry and the people engaged in it, and when we come to Honduras, "the kingdom *par excellence* of the banana companies", we find a sharp indictment of a situation in which the companies go nearly scot-free of taxes, absorb three-fourths of the national revenue "to pay off loans at exorbitant rates contracted in moments of revolutionary stress", and, in the case of the United Fruit Company, kill all local trading enterprises by selling American goods imported duty free. All this, however, is incidental to the dramatic story of travel and adventure which forms the main substance of the book, in whose telling Mr. Beals shows, even more strikingly than in his previous books, his rare gift of vivid description and arresting characterization.

The book falls into two parts. The first, an account of a journey through Guatemala, Salvador and Honduras, narrates an adventure in which crowded trains and mud-bespattered automobiles, filthy hotels and uncertain meals, conversations with all sorts and conditions of people, village life, police brutality, drinking and dancing, sweltering heat, dust and vermin, customs formalities, seductive girls, ancient ruins, and imposing tropical scenery mingle with excursions into history and recent politics in a panorama such as only Mr. Beals can paint. Whether to a traveller less eager and sensitive the countries and their peoples would seem as picturesque as they seem to him is open to question, but no living student of Central America has succeeded so well in transferring to words the fruits of a keen and sympathetic observation.

The second half of the book is the story, now told in full for the first time, of Mr. Beals's famous visit to Sandino, the Nicaraguan popular leader, and his interviews with American officers and others afterwards. For sheer nerve, audacity, and physical endurance the search for Sandino would be hard to match, and Sandino himself stands out in the picture as a very different person from the brutal and lawless "bandit" of the American press and naval officialdom. "Of course," said General Feland, when Beals faced him with his story, "in the army we use the word 'bandit' in a technical sense, meaning the member of a band", but when asked whether, "in the publicity which you give out to the United States . . . you explain to the dear public" that a technical term is being used, Feland could only reply: "Guess you've got us on the hip there".

One suspects that Mr. Beals, in his feeling for the rights and aspirations of Central American peoples, is a bit over-willing to get American intervention "on the hip", that he draws somewhat harshly the features of the American officials whom he met, and that Sandino is viewed through glasses that are

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at least slightly tinted. At most, however, such over-emphasis is a natural defect of the quality. It is well that the romantic elements he discovers and his sensitive appreciation of things that are different should be set out in the vivid fashion given them here, for of what is sordid and mercenary we have long since heard quite enough.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

THE COMING OF SOUTH AMERICA *by Henry Kittredge Norton* (JOHN DAY. $3.50)

THIS book embodies the observations and reflections which Mr. Norton made during nearly a year spent in studying political and economic developments in the leading South American countries under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Not many of the observations are very penetrating and the reflections are hardly profound; but the reader who can be contented with a pleasantly written journalistic sketch of conditions in Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile will find the book well up to date and usefully informing. Mr. Norton does well to point out that the term "Latin America" is a misnomer, since it not only does not describe accurately the Indian, Negro, and mixed racial elements of the population, but tends to obscure the differences which exist between the various South American countries. On the other hand, the revolutions which occurred in 1930-31 in the five countries which he studied seem to have differed more in incidents than in fundamental causes. In all of them dependence upon the export of some single product is out of proportion to the benefits accruing from other forms of industry or trade.

Anti-American feeling, Mr. Norton thinks, is not very deep-rooted, notwithstanding the criticisms of intellectuals and a running fire of newspaper attack, and a good deal of such suspicion as exists he attributes to European propaganda. The great bond is the general desire for American capital and American trade. The latter has been realized in a volume of trade greater than that of Great Britain, Germany and France combined; the gratification of the former has appeared in part in public loans whose history has been an "orgy of irresponsible money-lending". Some of the comments upon the United States and its policy which Mr. Norton met with are not complimentary, and his book suggests that the United States has much to learn about the extent to which South American culture has developed, and the degree to which American ways have been adopted without yielding to the American spirit.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

THE SPIRIT OF BRITISH POLICY *by Hermann Kantorowicz* (OXFORD. $6.50)

THE primary purpose of this book, the work of an eminent German jurist, is to disprove the notion of the "encirclement" of Germany through the operations of British diplomacy as a cause of the World War. The "encirclement myth" has bulked large in the writings of those who have sought to free Germany from the imputation of "war guilt", and Professor Kantorowicz formerly espoused it, but subsequent study has convinced him that the myth, while responsible for the war, was without foundation in fact. He marshals evidence, including the reports of the last four ambassadors of imperial Germany at London, to show that Great Britain was not seriously disturbed by Germany's commercial expansion, that it did not desire war and made no diplomatic preparations for it, and that the origin of the myth is to be ascribed

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to the Kaiser, Chancellor von Bülow, and Admiral von Tirpitz in their efforts to arouse support for their big program of naval building. Preceding the particular exposition of this thesis, however, is a brilliant and sympathetic study of British national character which, to most readers, will prove more interesting than the later historical and diplomatic discussion. Professor Gilbert Murray, who contributes the Preface, counters Professor Kantorowicz's rather mocking allusion to Britain's "naïve faith in the efficiency of the League of Nations" by frankly asserting that "for us the success of the League is a matter of life or death". The German text has been revised and somewhat altered in translation.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

TWENTY THOUSAND YEARS IN SING SING *by Lewis E. Lawes* (LONG & SMITH. $3.00)

THE title of this diverting volume by the Warden of the most famous American prison is misleading. To accurately describe its contents it should have been called "The Joys of Jail", for here we have a story, not of punishment for sins, but of comfort after crime. After a term in the army Mr. Lawes became a guard in Clinton Prison, at Dannemora, reckoned the severest place of confinement in New York State. Striped uniforms prevailed; limited rations, no talking between prisoners, and but small allowances of tobacco were the rule. Oppression hovered over the whole institution. Guards and keepers were expected to pay political assessments to the dominant political party. Lawes and another man refused to do this and expected soon to be out, but "somehow managed to hang on".

In a year he was transferred to Auburn, and in October, 1906, to the State Reformatory at Elmira, where he spent eight "happy" years. Then, after another reformatory appointment at Hart's Island, he went as warden to Sing Sing in 1919. From this point on his book became picturesque and interesting. His first step was to warn William L. Ward and Michael Walsh, Republican and Democratic bosses of Westchester County, that from that time on politics would have no share in prison management. Both smilingly assented, and soon found it to be true. He began by offering to meet the prisoners halfway, and by every account he has done so. He reformed the prison Welfare League, having learned from a prisoner "that the intellectual part of the inmate population" had never been represented in it. He announced to the League's officers: "most of the inmates of this institution are decent individuals" and proceeded to deal with them on that humane and far-reaching basis.

What the Warden did was really to develop life behind the prison walls into a community. The musical were organized into a band that plays while the men march to their meals. The *Bulletin* was edited by a trained newspaper man, who had killed his wife. The bullying type of guard made way for men with some interest in the welfare of their charges. Prison life under these conditions became as tolerable as the inmates would permit it to be. Athletics were made important, after the Warden had cut out an arrangement whereby sundry prisoners were playing the races through outside telephone connections. So he is able to write: "As a matter of fact, during the last twenty-five years most prison administrations throughout the country have advanced more rapidly in moral tone than other public, quasi-public institutions, or even mercantile establishments". The worst prisoner the death house ever held was a woman who finally won her freedom.

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Mr. Lawes believes in the parole system, both for moral and economic reasons; it costs the State but one-fifth of the sum to watch a paroled man that it does to keep him in a cell. Moreover he is much less likely to return than the one who serves his full time. There will be a loud "amen" to Mr. Lawes's dictum that "prisons should turn out men better than they came in".

DON C. SEITZ

BENEDICT ARNOLD: MILITARY RACKETEER *by Edward Dean Sullivan* (VANGUARD. $3.00)

DESPITE its misleading title, Mr. Sullivan has produced an excellent biography of the man who, until jealousy and financial need led him astray, was the ablest fighting general in the American army of the Revolution. He lives in infamy as the man who brought Major André to the gallows. By the irony of fate the latter is remembered with sympathy, though agent of the "treason". Until he fell Arnold's achievements were of the first rank. He led his troops six hundred miles through the winter wilderness to attack Quebec, and quite deserved the encomium of Washington: "The merit of that officer is certainly great, and I heartily wish that Fortune may distinguish him among her favourites. He will do everything that prudence and valour can suggest". Alas! Fortune had no such good intent! Subsequently he fought a successful battle on Lake Champlain, was the real victor instead of the vain and timorous Gates at Saratoga, thus securing the surrender of Burgoyne. The extravagances of a foolish second wife appear to have had much to do with his fall. His accounts became confused, he was treated to a congressional inquiry, and his desire to be ranked as senior major-general was not complied with. Made military governor of Philadelphia—his wife's home town—his extravagance and troubles increased, to end in the fateful tragedy at Tappan and everlasting infamy. He ravaged the Connecticut coast and Virginia as a British commander, and ended his life in England, but not under the British colours. Arnold died June 14, 1801. On the eve of his demise he is credited with calling for his old Continental uniform: "Let me die in my old uniform. God forgive me for ever putting on any other".

DON C. SEITZ

LITTLE ALECK *by E. Ramsay Richardson* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $3.50)

MRS. RICHARDSON, who is a Virginian, writes eloquently of Alexander Hamilton Stephens, the Georgia statesman who became Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy. He had advised waiting until Lincoln violated the Constitution (which he never did), and, indeed, was strangely insistent in demanding equality for Georgia in a Union where its rights had never been denied. Mrs. Richardson says he could have been President of the Confederacy. He felt that he should obey the will of his State and when Georgia seceded he went with her. Yet he said, when appealed to as a possible president: "No, no! I have not been in the movement. I was opposed to secession. I cannot take any office. . . . It would not be judicious". The outcome was that he was chosen for second place and was filling it before Davis came upon the political scene at Montgomery, Alabama, from his Mississippi plantation.

He had been inaugurated upon his birthday, February 11, 1861. When asked to head a delegation to Washington to arrange a peaceful separation he declined, saying correctly:

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"I have no idea that Mr. Buchanan will recognize our government or enter into any treaty with us". No more could he bring himself to believe that Lincoln "actually contemplated a war of subjection". This scepticism was accompanied by the difficulty of making treaties between the "sovereign" Southern States and the government of the new "Confederacy". Virginia, indeed, remained aloof, though she had raised an army of twenty thousand under Robert E. Lee, to protect her "sacred soil". Stephens went to Richmond and conferred with Lee in the interest of the Montgomery government. He had fears of the outcome and was relieved to find that the General had no personal ambitions and agreed that union with the Confederate States "was in every way desirable". Ex-President John Tyler conducted the negotiations with Stephens. The "treaty" was soon drawn up and was at once accepted by the Virginia convention. Northern troops invaded the "sacred soil" and the South became solidified in secession. Thus the hope of Stephens that there might be no war came to an abrupt end. Unable to accomplish anything, Stephens retired to Georgia and took to reading Scott's novels. From this vantage he foresaw the doom of the Confederacy, blockaded by armies on the land and by ships on the sea. As one of the commissioners at the Hampton Roads conference to bring an honourable end to the conflict he found a sympathetic friend in General U. S. Grant, though Appomattox had to bring the war's termination. Stephens was treated to a term in a cell at Fort Warren, but after his release was much honoured and respected. Georgia sent him to Congress for a term. He did not feel strong enough for a second, and was made governor. He died in office. The book is an admirable recital of his career,

DON C. SEITZ

LUSTY SCRIPPS *by Gilson Gardner* (VANGUARD. $3.50)

MR. GARDNER writes a lively life of his old employer, E. W. Scripps, founder of the largest and most successful American newspaper chain, who lived from 1854 to 1926, surviving the strain of his many enterprises and the consumption of four quarts of whisky each day, to wind up with a fortune of fifty millions. He founded thirty-odd daily newspapers and a successful news-gathering association. Yet it is hard to conclude that he was a great journalist. His papers were machine-made and as a rule expressionless in matters of moment. This did not prevent them from being profitable and good advertising mediums, as they still remain. Scripps was the thirteenth child of an English bookbinder who had sought to better his fortunes in America. "In reviewing his own career", explains Mr. Gardner, "Mr. Scripps expresses his belief that there is very little difference in human beings, except the difference produced by environment, accident, opportunity and necessity"—which would seem to cover most of the things that are. Further: "He sees all people thrust into the world with more or less momentum. Some have greater native force and some have less. In his own case he feels that he started with mediocre abilities, . . . with opportunities that are open to anyone. . . . Mr. Scripps concludes that those who have not accomplished greatly are those who would rather dream than think, and rather loaf than labour". On this premise he may be presumed to have proceeded along the high road to success. Yet Mr. Gardner reveals that he loved to loaf. He managed, however, to surround himself with those who liked to labour, and complacently sheared them of their wool.

DON C. SEITZ

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SAINTS AND SINNERS *by Gamaliel Bradford* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

WHEN Gamaliel Bradford died there was a great deal of loose talk about his being a sort of American Lytton Strachey. The curious thing was that this comparison was made not only by the newspaper obituary writers, most of whom had never read Strachey and practically none of whom had read Bradford, but by some perfectly genuine critics as well. Mr. Mencken, for example, announced that Bradford had invented the formula for *Queen Victoria*. In most cases this theory was motivated by a conscious or unconscious chauvinism—a desire to point to an American biographer as fascinating as the English psychology boys. Nothing could be further from the truth. Where Strachey is brilliant, epigrammatic, witty, Bradford is dull, serious, pedestrian. Where Strachey unscrupulously and engagingly uses his subjects as points of departure for his own well-nourished superciliousness, Bradford conscientiously and unexcitingly tries to get at the kernel of their personalities. Where the Englishman is aloof, ironic, destructive, the New Englander is almost painfully engrossed, a patient delver after truth. Casanova and the other saints and sinners whose souls are explored in this book—Caesar Borgia, Saint Francis, Thomas à Kempis, Talleyrand, Fénélon, Byron—are obviously poles apart in many instances, but they share a common fanaticism: all are devoted to some one thing to the comparative exclusion of everything else. Moderation is unknown to them. Thus to link the two that are perhaps superficially the most dissimilar, Saint Francis fulfils himself in an orgy of souls, Casanova in an orgy of bodies.

As if to offset the simple, earnest, rather Sunday-school quality of the author's writing, this book has not only been given a provocative title but has been dished up with such chapter headings as "The Riot of Youth" (Caesar Borgia), "God's Vagabond", (we're going to let you guess whom the rest apply to), "The Devil's Vagabond", "Alone with God", "The Prince of Darkness", "God and the World" (Fénélon, in case you're stuck), and "The Glory of Sin". There's very little in the portraits that's dime-novelish enough to justify these titles. Bradford's relentless, diplomatic Talleyrand, his self-indulgent, hot-headed Borgia, differ from the Talleyrands and the Borgias of history books chiefly in that an attempt is made to interpret their actions in terms of inner personality. But the interpretation is on the whole more painstaking than inspired. And is not always convincing. We are told for example that Talleyrand, inveterate analyst of others, was about as good as a prize-fighter at analyzing himself; could never have been capable of the self-exploration of Napoleon, who once surprisingly confided to him: "Frankly, I am a contemptible coward, essentially contemptible". Bradford bases his theory about Talleyrand's obtuseness in this regard chiefly on the fact that he never revealed himself in his *Mémoires*, but this seems to me inconclusive. Maybe he didn't want to reveal himself in his memoirs, the sly dog!

In short, *Saints and Sinners* falls between stools, or shall we say schools: the school of fact, and the school of fantasy. Bradford doesn't just tell you what happened, like Xenophon; and he doesn't just tell you what didn't happen, like Ludwig. Nor does he march into the arena with some preconceived attitude, like Strachey and Guedalla. He really tries to make honest interpretations. Sometimes he succeeds, as in the case of Byron. "He had the poet's divine gift of

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making his egotism beautiful," he writes, "and in expressing his own ego he was doing the same kind office . . . for the ego of all of us." But on the whole the best you can say of this book is that it is a competent bit of workmanship. Which is another way of saying that genius is anything but an infinite capacity for taking pains.

GEOFFREY T. HELLMAN

JOHN WESLEY *by C. E. Vulliamy* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

ONE hesitates to damn a book like this, so obviously the fruit of years of research and containing such an enormous body of fact. Yet it is not sufficiently well written, nor sufficiently well organized, to gain many readers other than those who have a burning interest in Methodism. It is often pedantic, although there are flashes of humour here and there, and the author's attitude, although he does describe episodes in which Wesley appears ridiculous, is one of attenuated hero-worship. Wesley is forever striding through crowds of hostile Englishmen, oblivious of brickbats, stones and rotten eggs. Until he is past eighty he rushes around, converting people to a religious order with rules (adopted in 1765) which required that there were to be no backs to chapel seats, that "the foolish custom of breaking bread to each other at love-feasts was to be abandoned", that people were to "abstain from useless compliments, silly ejaculations and words without meaning but might call each other brother and sister if they pleased". Wesley is shown as sadly deficient in his personal relationships, though he spends his life meddling with other people's affairs. But to Mr. Vulliamy, at any rate, he is "a living character of rare beauty and force".

GEOFFREY T. HELLMAN

THE MEANING OF THE GLORIOUS KORAN *by Marmaduke Pickthall* (KNOPF. $7.50)

THE excellence of this translation as a work of literature is perhaps due to Mr. Pickthall's being an English writer of distinction; the carefulness of its title, as also of the "explanatory" features of the text itself, is occasioned by his being an English Muslim. The purpose of this version, which is based wholly on Arabic authorities, is primarily to furnish English Muslims some equivalent for a King James version of their sacred book; and secondarily to make clear to all English readers "what Muslims the world over hold to be the meaning of the words of the Koran". It is the prevalence of the Muslim point of view which peculiarly distinguishes the present volume from the three or four other versions that have appeared since the Koran was first translated into English. In Mr. Pickthall's commentaries, the only references to the vast body of German secular scholarship on the subject are to the *History* of Nöldecke, whom he calls the "greatest of the 'higher' critics". These references are frequent enough to add the interest of a rigorously critical attitude, which might not be expected in one of "those who have surrendered" to Allah and his apostle.

For nearly thirteen centuries the force of Arab tradition has preserved the Koran in exactly the form and arrangement which it received at the hands of the third Caliph and his helpers at some time during the second and third decades following Muhammad's death. The aspect which that arrangement presents to most Western orientalists is fairly if harshly expressed in a French translator's view of the Muslim's sacred scripture: "a formless and incoherent assemblage of moral, religious, civil, and political precepts, mixed

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with exhortation, promises, and threats". Mr. Pickthall admits these surface difficulties of form, but denies that the traditional arrangement (to which he of course adheres) is haphazard; and he speaks for Islam again when he says that "closer study will reveal a sequence and significance": for example, the placing of the *surahs* in almost the reverse order of their time of revelation signifies the unimportance of chronology (Time not existing with Allah) as compared with the psychology of religious belief—"the inspiration of the Prophet progressed from inmost things to outward things, whereas most people find their way through outward things to things within".

Besides a general index of subjects, Mr. Pickthall has added an alphabetic list of more than seventy topics on which legislation was revealed. The introduction includes a curious summary of Muhammad's ethical teachings and the consequent worldly reforms effected by the prophet turned emperor during "the ten years of success, the fullest that has ever crowned one man's endeavour". After reading Mr. Pickthall's introduction and his translation, one sees, as never before, the rightness of Muhammad's inclusion among the heroes whom Carlyle worshipped; one more nearly comprehends how it is that something like one-sixth of the men of this earth still acknowledge him as their guide.

HANSELL BAUGH

WITHIN FOUR WALLS *by Major M. C. C. Harrison and Captain H. A. Cartwright* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $3.00)

IN 1914 Major Harrison was a subaltern in an Irish infantry regiment. He took part in the fighting at Mons and Le Cateau, and was wounded and captured in October 1914. After several weeks in hospital, where he received treatment which varied between the extremes of unselfish kindness and inhuman brutality at the hands of German doctors and attendants, he was transferred to the prison camp at Burg-bei-Magdeburg. There he met Captain Cartwright, who had been wounded and captured at Mons during the first action of the war.

This narrative is compiled partly from memory, partly from the records filed at the War Office, and from diaries which the authors kept during their imprisonment. It relates the thrilling story of their attempts to escape from military prison camps, and later from the German police prisons where their unlucky failures landed them. As the war drew out interminably, the business of escaping became increasingly difficult. On the other hand, the long and dangerous march through Germany to the frontier became rather easier, and the ingenious Englishmen perfected a technique of escape. Since they spoke little German, escape by train was out of the question, even if they had felt certain enough of their forged papers to submit them voluntarily to inspection at the larger stations. They were forced to travel by night, skirting villages and farms, and hiding by day in barns or outbuildings, or in patches of woods. On several occasions they reached the frontier only to be recaptured. Once they were retaken after they had actually crossed into Holland and, misdirected by a water-soaked compass, had wandered back again into Germany. Both officers finally escaped—Harrison in September 1917, and Cartwright in August 1918—after four years of continuous effort.

Within Four Walls is a remarkably interesting and detailed record, and Captain Cartwright's amusing illustrations add a great deal to its spirit.

MARGARET WALLACE

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LUDWIG TIECK AND ENGLAND *by Edwin H. Zeydel, Ph.D.* (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS. $2.75)

HERDER AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF GERMAN NATIONALISM *by Robert Reinhold Ergang, Ph.D.* (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS. $4.50)

THE first of these volumes, subtitled *A Study in the Literary Relations of Germany and England During the Early Nineteenth Century*, deals with one of the most interesting of all chapters in the history of nineteenth century literary influence.

Ludwig Tieck, in disposition romantic and irresponsible, in scholarship rarely reliable and always indolent, succeeded by the very peculiarity of his talents and enthusiasms—and to a degree greater than any of his countrymen—in establishing and fostering a strong interest in English literature within the confines of the Fatherland. Dr. Zeydel shows us in ample outline the functioning of these talents and the persuasive effect of his enthusiasms not only on his own countrymen but on those people whom he encountered abroad.

Tieck's chief impulse for the study of English literature arose from an early interest in Shakespeare. Both as a critic and as a translator of Shakespeare he later proved defective, but an aptitude for a purely verbal interpretation of Shakespeare's characters together with other histrionic talents brought him a high critical repute and developed at the same time a strong romantic interest in Shakespeare throughout Germany. Tieck assisted A. W. Schlegel in his translation of Shakespeare's plays into German, but the service was listlessly performed and the contribution of a spotty and uneven quality. He began, too, a translation of the Sonnets on his own account, a task which he eventually abandoned. It was later finished by his daughter.

Tieck's Shakespearean "criticism" is marred seriously by his predilection for the then doubtful plays, particularly those which have subsequently been assigned to other authors. His criticism was unmeasured and unclassical. It is valuable now chiefly in the romantic emphasis which it placed on Shakespeare as a titan beyond the rules of decorum and order. Tieck constantly stresses the quality of "abandon". He disparaged Coleridge as a critic of Shakespeare and found himself in the same rôle subsequently disparaged by Carlyle.

The conclusion at which Dr. Zeydel finally arrives is that Tieck after 1830 had "gained the reputation of being the foremost German student and friend of English letters". Moreover "his popularity with English translators was quick to flower, steady for thirty years, and unusually great". There is a further chapter on Tieck's immense library. It serves as an excellent study in book-collecting, in the patience it requires, and in the thousand and one difficulties it breeds.

Dr. Ergang's volume, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism* is Number 341 in the Columbia University *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, a series edited by the faculty of political science in Columbia. Not only is the book of value to students of political science in its study of nationalism but it is of high importance to students of comparative literature, to students of the romantic movement, and to students of German literature per se. The vital influence of Herder in each of these fields cannot easily be over-estimated.

Herder is the Ur-figure in the development of nationalism as a social and political philosophy. Roughly speaking his life occupies the second half of the eighteenth cen-

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tury, overlapping a small bit at each end. Prior to his birth, prior that is to the mid-eighteenth century, not only was the spirit of nationalism lacking in Germany but there was virtually no patriotism. Evidence of an essential patriotism evinced itself for the first time in Germany only towards the end of that century. Herder, says Dr. Ergang, "set up for his countrymen an ideal of future achievement which was to serve as a psychological basis in the struggle for political and economic unity. In a word, Herder formulated the idea of German nationalism". Dr. Ergang carefully cautions us towards the end of his volume against confusing Herder's "nationalism" with the narrow war-freighted "nationalism" of late nineteenth-century Germany. Herder's "nationalism" was fraternal and non-aggressive. There is no suggestion in it of *Deutschland über Alles*.

The sheer strength of Herder's influence on subsequent German literature for example is almost without parallel. He is the father of "comparative literature" as we now know it and is in turn we might say the grandfather of "comparative philology". The study of "Germanic philology" too (always a *bête noire* for aspiring Ph.D's in language), although developed more specifically by Humboldt and Grimm, had its real origin with Herder. Finally, above all else, he shared along with Kant, Goethe and Schiller a prime responsibility for what we now refer to as the German romantic movement.

Herder's chief importance to the romantic movement was that he, more than anyone else, initiated the period of *Sturm und Drang*. "Herder", writes Dr. Ergang, "revolted against the authority of arbitrary rules and conventional forms, both in art and in life. He not only rejected the French poetical rules, as did Lessing, but he rejected all rules." He was "impatient of all rules and restrictions except those imposed by nature, and he, therefore, insisted that to be genuine a literary product must be the spontaneous expression of the national soul". It is noteworthy that Scherer some decades later defined the Romanticists as "that group of German writers which continued to develop and made the most use of Herder's suggestions".

A further influence of Herder lay in the enouncement of a new philosophy of history. His doctrine, essentially evolutionary, described history as a series of links in the development of man. The Middle Ages, which were currently held in contempt, were regarded by him as one of the necessary links. He sought merely to explain them. He further referred to history as "a drama which is being enacted on our planet", thereby giving utterance to an interpretation which still commonly attends us.

Dr. Ergang writes well and his pages bristle with interesting facts. The book is at once scholarly and readable. A sixteen-page bibliography is appended.

WARD M. MILLER

A HISTORY OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC *by F. A. Kirkpatrick* (CAMBRIDGE; MACMILLAN. $5.00)

So slight is the general knowledge of Latin American history in this country that Mr. Kirkpatrick's somewhat brief volume on the Argentine, commemorating the centenary of the Republic's independence, is more than welcome. It tells compactly and interestingly a story which opens with Spanish exploration and conquest in the sixteenth century and comes to a close with the fall in September 1930 of Irigoyen's government. Mr. Kirkpatrick knows his background and the

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Argentine people; his book is marked by that combination of understanding and detachment which so often makes a foreigner a country's best historian.

The Argentine Republic's history is difficult and confusing for a North American reader and lacks something of the romance and glamour of that of Peru or Mexico. But even though the early Spanish explorers found no Aztec or Inca empire to conquer, incessant warring against the Indians characterized the early stages of the country's development, while in the remarkable exploits of San Martin, the Argentine played a conspicuous rôle in the wars of independence in the first decades of the past century. To secure its own liberties the Republic proceeded to overthrow Spanish power in Chile and in Peru—San Martin coöperating with and eventually surrendering the command to Bolivar in the latter country.

The nineteenth century was a long struggle for consolidation marked by the rivalry of the unitarians and the federalists, and of Buenos Aires and the provinces of the interior. The dictatorship of Rosas and the Paraguayan war are the episodes which stand out most clearly amid the confusion of civil warfare and continual *coups d'état*, but Mr. Kirkpatrick also shows graphically how beneath the surface of these events Argentine was gradually achieving stability and order and developing its great natural resources.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

THE SPANISH CROWN, 1808-1931 *by Robert Sencourt* (SCRIBNER'S. $5.00)

IF *The Spanish Crown* is read as a chain of portraits linked together by a throne, as perhaps its author intended it to be read, then his performance is commendable. But if it is read for more, to which it does make some tantalizing pretensions, the reader is in the way of disappointment. For, while it is with the delineation of the inheritors of the crown that Mr. Sencourt is primarily concerned and with their *milieus* only secondarily, the slighting of the latter tends to make unreal figures of the former and to produce a book which moves only just beneath the surface of the Spanish past. Consequently, in trends or issues of importance, his analyses are not infrequently inadequate and his interpretation, taken as a whole, is unsatisfying. For these reasons and because of a method which fails to plant comprehensive cues and summaries at judicious intervals, Mr. Sencourt does not succeed in fecundating his reader's imagination. There is the added complication of a diction which, though sometimes brilliant, is also sometimes obscure, over-grand, and sometimes downright careless. In two respects the book exhibits genuine skill: in description, be it the baptism of an Infante or the entombment of a King, and in narration. And there is an irresistible contagion arising from the author's own delight in his chronicle.

WARD HALLER

PHILIP II OF SPAIN *by David Loth* (BRENTANO. $3.75)

MR. LOTH has succeeded in his effort to rehabilitate Philip II without any special pleading. Philip II was just somebody's son, an excellent specimen of his type—sane, self-disciplined, pious, industrious. His offspring were to show how much worse a man can behave who is born to a ready-made position. Not having the personal style that enabled his father to hold the world stage, Philip clung to his desk and lived in bureaucratic retirement. However, the "Spider of the Escorial" was kind to his servants, wrote

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charming letters to his daughters, was considerate of the unfortunate Mary Tudor, and suffered pain without flinching. A picturesque instance of his withdrawal from life were his thoughts on Queen Elizabeth. "I have decided to place on one side all other considerations which might have urged me against it and marry the Queen of England." To appreciate this utterance one should place it beside one or two of the ornate compliments which appear to have been the breath of life to the English Diana. But no doubt a high sense of duty was here manifest, since Philip had already married one Tudor belle. Much later Philip issued an edict warning rough sailors in the Armada to avoid blasphemy. When news came of the wreck of the fleet "from force of habit he corrected the spelling and called attention to minor discrepancies in the reports of officers who had been fighting the English and the weather for weeks, who were starving, sleepless and wounded when they wrote". Good habits can be as exasperating as bad ones.

ROBERTS TAPLEY

CRUSADE FOR THE ANEMONE *by Princess Marthe Bibesco* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THE result of Princess Bibesco's crusade, the ramifications of which are transmitted in five letters written from the Holy Land, is to make rational apostasy unattractive by discovering faith as the true "remedy for disenchantment". Faith grants that which the Princess's own soul so much desires—unity, continuity, a beginning, and no end; Palestine promises "a united past for all civilized beings". But it is a symbol torn down and recreated "with the immaterial stones sold by the merchants of lights and shadows". Hence, "all that is heaven and all that is earth draws me. All that men have built repels me. Here I seek only the living rock". It is the "caveman's Christianity" of pre-sectarian days.

The letters make coin of an established intimacy. A word may serve to conjure up a world—an excellent reason here for selecting the letter form. In this correspondence the writer's success in unburdening her innermost soul, in giving expression to the "unbodied joys" and sorrows of the spirit—thoughts, feelings, emotions which, except in the case of a highly self-conscious, analytical and eloquent nature, stop ordinarily at the threshold of articulation—is conditioned to a greater degree than is usual in literature by the inflammability of our responsive natures. Much is told by means of "a parallel very intimate yet at once divine and familiar"; much, by a device of linking with the miraculous the common sense, with the supernal the commonplace, with the present the past. So that before long, by virtue of the celerity and variety of its startings and the multitude and brevity of its stoppings, the excursion into the domain of the spirit becomes torrential in overtone. Its attendants, a Franciscan tenderness and a sleight-of-hand humour, the allusion of erudition, reminiscence of golden legend and fairy-tale, the sentience of a sage and the grace of a fresh syntax, all combine to render the *Crusade* a rich undertaking indeed.

WARD HALLER

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH *by Catherine Macdonald Maclean* (VIKING. $5.00)

FIVE years ago Miss Maclean wrote an excellent little monograph, *Dorothy and William Wordsworth*. It was, in spite of much biographical data, essentially a book of literary criticism. The present volume is pure biography. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a book on the Wordsworths which could

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contain fewer references to his poetry or quotations from it. This, it seems to me, is very wise. Biography and literary criticism are not often successfully combined.

Miss Maclean begins her book with the marriage of the parents of William and Dorothy, but it is not until William and Dorothy set up housekeeping in Dove Cottage at Grasmere that she gets into the swing of her book. From that time on the book becomes so vivid and so real that the reader can hear and see the many characters who come and go as the pages of the book are turned. Dove Cottage was no secluded habitation. Besides William, Mary his wife, Dorothy, and the several Wordsworth children, there were others who stayed with them regularly. Sara Hutchinson was there, and Coleridge, too, and the Coleridge boys. Besides these, there were many who would come and spend a few weeks. Dorothy often wondered how they would shelter so many people at once, but no one was ever turned away, and the house was constantly full.

One can imagine what a busy household it was. And, moving quietly above it all, taking care of the innumerable trifles as well as the greater matters, was the capable and loving Dorothy. Everything, it seemed, depended on her. Mary seems to have delegated to her the running of the house, as well as the sewing. The children always ran to Aunt Dorothy in joy or in sorrow. The garden was her duty, also; and both William and Coleridge demanded much of her time to criticize and copy their work. One wonders how she ever had the time or the physical endurance to do so much; but in spite of frequent illnesses, she seems to have done everything. And not only was she in demand in the house, but the neighbours took much of her time, and William, suddenly wanting to get away from the noise of the house and the children would ask her to accompany him on expeditions afield. In time she came to be able to do twenty miles a day on foot, and one of the best portions of this volume describes the tour of Scotland which she and William made in 1803. Away from the manifold cares of the household, she was free to let her careful eye observe all the interesting things she saw. This tour of Scotland, as Miss Maclean describes it, surpasses Dr. Johnson's for wit, observation and interest.

Miss Maclean's writing is full of charm. She has captured the note of the period in such a fashion that there is never a moment's thought that anything is artificial or sentimental. Dorothy, towering above all the other characters in the book, is no creation of the author, but a real woman. Even the utterly trivial things which she does seem of importance. There is joy in her happiness with the Wordsworth children, and sorrow in her grief as she watches the collapse of Coleridge. One feels all through the book the increasing magnificence of Dorothy's character, which reaches a superb climax at the poignant and pitiful death of Catherine Wordsworth. The book rings with sincerity, and its loveliness cannot be easily forgotten. In its gentle way it is a classic.

E. SINCLAIR HERTELL

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THE NEW NOVELS

Some weeks ago the first of Charles Williams's novels to be published in America, *The Place of the Lion* (Norton. $2.50), came into the office for review. What was immediately apparent about the book was that it had gone through sympathetic hands. It was light and comfortable to handle, and its quiet blue and gold cover, stamped with a symbol not too difficult to riddle, set it effectively apart from the riot of screaming book-jackets above and below it. Nevertheless it was not the first of that day's books to be read. Perhaps it was too courteously unobtrusive for its own good; perhaps I turn much too jaundiced an eye on any quotations from English reviewers, however restrained; or it may be that I had a premonition that once I started reading it my peace of mind would be gone for good and all.

There was no sleep for me the night I started in with "From the top of the bank, behind a sparse hedge of thorn, the lioness stared at the Hertfordshire road". Three intolerably long weeks later copies of Mr. Williams's first two novels, *War in Heaven* and *Many Dimensions*, arrived from England. By this time I had learned to believe in my good fortune. I no longer read quickly and apprehensively, and so for three days and four nights I was lost to the world. A little later Gollancz's edition of *The Greater Trumps* arrived, and when I had finished it I had caught up with Mr. Williams's novels, and since not even he can write books as fast as they can be read, I shall presumably come back to earth now and be of some use for a period.

Yet I have tried by every kind of guile and speciousness to excuse myself from writing about *The Place of the Lion*. Some of the futile loopholes I hoped to escape through were that this was essentially the sort of book which would have to find its audience by passing from friend to friend; that no one should be asked to write a review which must at the same time be a profession of faith; that one might as well label oneself prig and *précieuse* outright as be caught approving *The Place of the Lion* after seeing what the daily newspapers had done with it. Less petty and more honest was the consideration that it was impossible to do justice to the distinction of the book or the excellence of Mr. Williams's writing. Unfortunately, none of these excuses was quite good enough to wipe out the obligation incurred in those hours from midnight to dawn spent in deepening excitement and delight.

So, then, not to be too intense about it, Mr. Williams's novel is a story, a story taking place simultaneously on several levels. On the surface it is a tale of supernatural horrors, finally resolved. Beneath that there is a straightforward allegory. And beneath that you must go for yourself. As the book opens, its hero and a friend are waiting in the village of Smetham, after a long day of walking and discussion, for a bus back to London. Now in that village an adept in the platonic mysteries has been conducting a class on the platonic thought-forms. The

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group has included every type of follower after esotericism, from the time-killing dilettante, through the seekers for personal power, up to the true mystic. This heterogeneous class has dared to invoke the Forms, the angelic powers, the realities behind appearances, and it is on the verge of a catastrophic success. The great Elementals, entering through Dr. Berringer, who has voluntarily made a channel for them, a "breach in matter", are beginning to stalk the earth. They are seizing on whatever they can use in the minds of men and turning it to their own purposes. The rumour that a lioness has escaped from a wild-beast show and the desire of an initiate of the group for strength to destroy his enemies emerge into the lion who shakes the sky with thunder. The sly malice of a woman member becomes a crowned serpent, and the very fields and lanes of the village slip and roll with its approach. Beauty in the shape of one great butterfly into which all butterflies pass appears to a little entomologist, and the intellectual fire of the leader hangs as sultry heat in the air till it consumes the cottage where Berringer lies, entranced, in a phoenix' nest of flame. The epitome of horror is reserved for a young blue-stocking, who has played with philosophies as though they were dead things, arranging and collating them as if philosophy were an advanced pencil-game. Her contempt and arrogance, her ruthless use of philosophy to advance her own fortunes, her *libido sciendi*, are very nearly her destruction. She is saved partly by the grain of integrity that is still in her, and partly because she is beloved by the hero.

It is one of the book's major satisfactions that it has, in Anthony Durrant, a hero, not merely a chief male character, and it is perhaps Mr. Williams's major triumph that his Anthony Durrant is not a self-righteous paragon. Because Anthony holds his friends, Damaris and Quentin, dearer than his own safety, and because he loves wisdom without self-interest, the eagle of divine philosophy descends to be his familiar and safe-guard, and "knowing himself and knowing the others" he becomes for an hour, intentionally and consciously, archetypal Man, in whom all the powers—Strength and Subtlety, Ardour and Innocence—meet in balance. And since to man was promised domination over all the beasts of the field, Anthony is enabled to send the great beasts back again through the gate by which they entered, and the book closes.

Now any reader who finds even this bare, halting synopsis incomprehensible, any reader hostile for whatever reason to mysticism, will not like *The Place of the Lion*. There is another group which distrusts modern allegory; if, like so many of us, they are only weary and out of patience with those tales in which Pan upsets a Sunday-school picnic, they may become first among the fanatical admirers of Mr. Williams's novels. I believe that those who miss *The Place of the Lion* are missing one of the best books of our time, full of excitement and humour. The humour, to be sure, is of a specialized kind: Damaris is meditating a title for a projected paper, and feels vaguely that there is something wrong about *God's Idea of the World from Plato to Aquinas*; again, the archetypal Chairwoman of all little groups of advanced thinkers is introducing the speaker of the evening, and is moved to say "Many of us can no longer walk in the simple paths of childhood's faith—perhaps I should say alas! But we have found in this new doctrine a great suggestiveness, and each in our own way have done our best to carry it out". If you are not amused you can safely pass by the work of Mr. Williams.

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The heroine of Mr. R. C. Hutchinson's *The Answering Glory* (Farrar & Rinehart. $2.00) is a little old woman, a missionary to the island of "São Maharo", and she is no mean heroine. Fifty years on a tropical island have nearly wrecked Miss Thompson's heart, but she does not know it. She admits dizzy spells which annoyingly have to be taken into account when she is about the Lord's business, but not for a minute that she is sick enough to be invalided back to England. No one else wants the dull post at Homar Town, with natives and Portugese miners, and now and then a half-respectable English wanderer for company; but there is certainly work to be done there. If Miss Thompson were idiot enough to take to heart the concern of the few white people who see her at rare intervals, who would see that the chief did not beat his wife, or that the sanitation system ran decently, let alone that the natives would remember to say their prayers? This talk about going to England is nonsense, and Miss Thompson ignores it even when she is flat on her back.

But at last she is invalided home, shanghaied under the influence of a narcotic, from which she wakes for a moment to cry to the natives who are screaming with despair because "Mother" is being taken away that she will come back. The second part of the book is given over to the infinite wiles she resorts to in order to prove that she is as good as she ever was. Superannuation stares her in the face if she does recover, so it is a very desperate business for Miss Thompson. She must be spry and knowing, and never show that she is terrified of traffic; she must get well and get back somehow, though it strains all her ingenuity to do it.

As part of her campaign to prove herself entirely sound, she goes on the spur of the moment as substitute-lecturer to a smart girls' school. She is very shabby and shy, she has to talk as well as she can about another missionary's strange slides, and she makes a bad mess of it. The girls are bored; not even the pious youngsters are stimulated. But at the end of the lecture she feels she is justified in putting in a word or two about her own work. Since she never for a moment knows that she is heroic she understates her own case, and goes to bed as depressed as she could ever allow herself to become. But one of the girls, responding imaginatively to all the dry, shabby old Yorkshire woman has been unable to say, becomes her spiritual inheritor. Miss Thompson, after wangling a ticket back from the steamship company, dies beside her half-packed bags; but Barbara Gastell goes to carry the work on, swimming the shark-infested harbour when the men on the ship's boat refuse to land her.

There is not one word of piety as piety in the book; what Mr. Hutchinson thinks of the God of Sarah Thompson he keeps to himself, although one is bound to conclude from the facts he presents that some supernatural agent is at work strengthening and supporting, almost conniving with, the heroic mouse. The author's noncommittal attitude makes the book a wonder of sympathetic imagination. Miss Thompson's adventures in the labyrinth of London bus-routes are more hair-raising, because they terrify her far more, than her encounters with crocodiles and cannibals, and Mr. Hutchinson never succumbs to the temptation of showing the little scurrying, terrified figure as ludicrous. By what miracle was a young man of twenty-five able to see that it is possible to pinch pennies to the greater glory of God? We are justified in expecting a long and various series of good novels from an author who could present *The Answering Glory* as his first book.

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The two little girls, Selina and Moira, in Sheila Kaye-Smith's *Summer Holiday* (Harpers. $2.50) may not be the infant Miss Kaye-Smith and a younger sister, but if they are not this book is one of the greatest imaginative feats of all time. The notes of summer and Sussex and childhood are so flawlessly combined in it that it is difficult to treat the result as fiction. It seems far more likely that Miss Kaye-Smith is telling her readers unobtrusively why Sussex is the home of her heart, and why she sees its farms and its people under an undying glamorous light.

The two little daughters of a doctor go with their nurse each year to a farmhouse less than five miles from their home, but in Ultima Thule to the children; and the long summer days pass, each set off, clear and definite, by facts and emotions met for the first time. Memory has hardly begun, recurrence is barely comprehended, so that terror and bliss make Platnix farm alternately the Brocken and Paradise.

Moira, that five-year-old imp of perversity, is beautifully done. Even in her maturity, Miss Kaye-Smith seems to look back at her with despair not entirely conquered by adult humour. Less imaginative than Selina, holding endlessly against her elder sister the fact that she reached the world first, Moira makes herself into a living hair shirt. If Selina's imaginary playmate has a silver dress, Moira's is clothed in gold; let her live in a black house, Moira's house will be white. By the simple method of allowing the expansive Selina to go on record first, Moira can and invariably does see and raise her.

The book is at once delicate and hardy; it should not be overlooked.

On the other hand, I have seldom met in fiction a more sickeningly mischievous elf than the child heroine of Margaret Hamilton's *The Mango Tree* (Century. $2.00). This book is written in the first person, the prose is good, and the pictures of life in South Africa are interesting. But that frequently (although not frequently enough) punished heroine, with her refuge in the mango tree is too much. The mango drips imaginary playmates as a Christmas tree drips ornaments, with "Mrs. Brooks", the sum of all the things that "my mother" (poor soul!) was not, like an angel for the top.

Miss Hamilton took her own little cup to communion service, but the deacon passed by her hopeful upraised face. "Somehow that day I lost my taste for communion service—a taste I have never recovered", she says darkly. It is a perfectly typical passage. The author has not forgiven one slight, one pain, one punishment with the passage of years. "But I did not want to grow up," she says. "I determined not to grow up." She was successful.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

A GLASTONBURY ROMANCE *by John Cowper Powys* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $3.75)

For those to whom John Cowper Powys is already guide and philosopher extraordinary, *A Glastonbury Romance* adds 1174 pages drawn from those "primordial wells of deep delights" which have yielded so heavy a flow in his previous work. The pages are large, the print moderately small, thereby enabling this single book to contain almost half a million words. If not the longest novel ever written, at least it is the longest-winded. Thus, the first two sentences: "At the striking of noon on a certain fifth of March, there occurred within a causal radius

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of Brandon railway-station and yet beyond the deepest pools of emptiness between the uttermost stellar systems one of those infinitesimal ripples in the creative silence of the First Cause which always occur when an exceptional stir of heightened consciousness agitates any living organism in this astronomical universe. Something passed at that moment, a wave, a motion, a vibration, too tenuous to be called magnetic, too subliminal to be called spiritual, between the soul of a particular human being who was emerging from a third-class carriage of the twelve-nineteen train from London and the divine-diabolic soul of the First Cause of all life". This constitutes a fair warning and just indication of all that is to follow.

The jacket quotes Mr. Powys in a likening of his book to *King Lear, David Copperfield, The Possessed,* and *Wuthering Heights* as to content of "direct, simple, old-fashioned melodrama". This reviewer finds that melodrama suffers a change when viewed through the eyes of psychic insight. It may still be melodrama, but it is hardly "direct, simple", or "old-fashioned". Other parallels are easier to see. There is the eloquence of a Shakespeare without much of his poetry. There are touches of quaint humour, and Dickensian names, such as Penny Pitches, Tittie Petherton, Abel Twig, Isaac Wetherwax, Tossie Stickles and Young Tewsy. The maniacal obsessions utilized by Dostoievski are here reduced to personal triumphs for the author and the First Cause. Miss Brontë's atmospheric intensity is attempted and washed away in a downpour of supernatural influences minutely described. One can say that Mr. Powys has an excellent and catholic taste in literature, that his mind is powerful and retentive, and that he is not squeamish about taking what he can make his own. What cannot be said is that he shares the excellences of his models. Everything he touches is stamped with the unique impress of his vision.

He has fashioned a complicated plot, turning upon social, sexual, mythological, historical, religious, and mystical conflicts, which cannot be squeezed into the ordinary limits of a synopsis. It includes one murder, two deaths, three illegitimate children, and seven love affairs. There are also a flood, two miracles (the raising of a dead or epileptic child and the curing of Tittie Petherton's cancer, performed by "Bloody Johnny" Geard), a Passion Play, and a communistic experiment. Mr. Powys has created a host of characters, each one placed in his niche in this cross-section of English society. He ranges down to the bald-headed madwoman, Bet Chinnock; he rises to the Marquis of P.; in between there are the servants, a communist, an industrialist, an anarchist from the Scilly Isles, a Welsh antiquary, doctor, priests, cuckolds, lechers, a thief. Not content with only plot and character, Mr. Powys deals intermittently but at length with the Cymric, Druidic, Arthurian, Saxon, Norman, Christian and Modern influences resident in Glastonbury. Arthur's sword, resembling what John Crow had heard of the "so-called Cosmic Rays" fell into the river while he was looking at a drowned cat from the Pomparlès bridge; Sam Dekker saw the Holy Grail with a fish in it, possibly a tench; and Philip Crow's airplane drones a modern note in the air over Glastonbury. It finally becomes a performance of amazing virtuosity in which Mr. Powys never falters.

The purpose of all this has been well stated both by the author and his publishers. He wishes to gather his characters into a "straining knot of psychic relations"; the book offers a series of "mystical intimations". He has succeeded perhaps too well. For the

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value of *A Glastonbury Romance* rests entirely upon its psychic and mystical revelations. If Mr. Powys is not a major prophet, his characters become meaningless, their actions insignificant, and the whole book an over-inflated bladder of nonsense.

Let us consider Mr. Powys's ever-present First Cause. Now the First Cause is double-natured, has a personality, resides beyond the darkness which is beyond the astronomical world, sends forth black and white vibrations to act on mortals, has two eyes, one pouring forth good, the other evil, and receives prayers from earth. "A certain delicious shudder" in the First Cause is what mortals recognize as Sex in animal, vegetable, and human life. If one prays at noonday, it should be to the sun; if at midnight, to the moon. The best time to appeal to the First Cause is at either the morning or evening twilight. There is less chance of psychic interference then and the results are better.

In humbler vein, there are other jewels of mystic revelation which are much funnier. Mary Crow looked at a manure heap with three black fowls on it, and it became "at that second a sort of extension of her own personality", making her very happy. Shortly after that, John Crow's soul, sensitized by some "vicious" love-making, "flung forth an obscure prayer". It passed over Norfolk, over fens and dykes, and arrived at the sea-banks of the North Sea. "Here John's prayer left the earth altogether and shooting outward, beyond the earth's atmosphere, beyond the whole stellar system, just as if it had been an arrow shot from the Bow of Sagittarius the Centaur, reached the heart of his dead mother where she dwelt in the invisible world." This, mind you, had been made possible by John's and Mary's love-making which was "so free from traditional sentimentality and normal passion, so dominated by a certain cold-blooded and elemental lechery, that something in the fibrous interstices of the old tree against which they leaned was aroused by it and responded to it".

Somehow that leaves one speechless. When downright silliness shows as the heart and core of a book of such monumental proportions and imaginative vigour, it is no matter for laughter. Mr. Powys writes with a creative prodigality which is admirable. His insight into the human emotions is often most convincing. His descriptions and setting leave little to be desired. What a pity, therefore, that he must be essentially a self-hypnotized Houdini of psychic literature, always the destroyer of his undoubted gift. He is befouled in the immense dragnet of his psychic imagination. Small wood-louse and universe, tree and religious prophet, are all lost in equal nebulosity. And to make matters even worse, this is the identical mysticism the author has promoted since the First Cause only knows how long.

ARCHER WINSTEN

PITY OF GOD *by Beulah Marie Dix* (VIKING. $2.50)

THIS novel is a devastating picture of one day at the home of Joe and Ethel Vickery. The house, located in a beautiful canyon about an hour's drive from Los Angeles, is a compromise, in true suburban fashion, between expense and pretentiousness. She thinks Joe was very stubborn and foolish not to have made it larger when he was building. He is desperately wondering how long he will be able to stave off his creditors.

The day is Saturday, and of course more people than were expected come for the week-end. Cornelia, Joe's sister, arrives meditating suicide, thinking of the wealth that

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came too late to save her beloved daughter's life. Ethel's younger brother, Jed Pryor, comes to introduce his rich fiancée, Babby. He is afraid his sister's servant will say the wrong thing to him in front of Babby. Hertha, the servant, carries the child no one has suspected, and hopes she will be able to keep it after it is born. Monica Holt, Joe's secretary and mistress, hides the news of her tragedy until she is forced to tell Joe. Nathan Pryor enacts the humiliation of a dependent in his daughter's house. Two children suffer adolescent tortures, while the third, a toddling child, is happily too young to have become conscious heir to the flesh Miss Dix creates. And with an energetic, self-righteous, destroying finger in everyone's pie, "ubiquitous Ethel", in the worst possible sense of the word, *runs* her home. Most of us have known her sometime in our lives, and have got away as fast as we could. But I can remember no book which has created so powerfully the horror of an Ethel Vickery.

The story is told with excellent restraint. Miss Dix ranges back into the lives of her characters so that they are not, as it were, created for a momentary Roman holiday. She is able to strike a balance between what they seem to be, what they do, and what they are within their secret selves. That she has succeeded in this justifies an occasional ineptitude in stream-of-consciousness passages. Her wide sympathy, her psychological insight, and her use of incident are not to be questioned. She has piled one tragedy on top of another, but her structure is solid and impressive. Not even the final seventeen pages can destroy what Miss Dix has built. After all, it takes more than a flood, more than an act of God and a broken dam to wash away Ethel Vickery. The author was badly fooled, perhaps by the difficulty of her remaining task, perhaps by her experience in juvenile writing. The fast-fading bridge of San Luis Rey precipitated only an idea and five literary exercises into the gulf below. Miss Dix's flood has more to do and fails utterly. It leaves the novel untouched, but well worth reading.

ARCHER WINSTEN

AMBER SATYR *by Roy Flannagan*
(DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

ANOTHER young Southern writer takes a roundhouse swing at the poor whites of the South. Both as art and as demolition this book falls somewhat short of the efforts of Faulkner and Caldwell. But that is not to say that the days of delicate ladies and courtly gentlemen, of white mansions and quaint, faithful darkies do not again seem incredibly remote. The white man has become the rascal of a tragedy; the Negro is a victim noble by contrast.

Luther Harris, a magnificent amber-coloured giant, lives with his pretty yellow daughter, Sis, on the edge of a swamp. Near them are the low-down whites, John and Sarah Sprouse. John has rheumatism or pellagra so badly that he cannot fulfil the function of a husband, and Sarah's imagination turns to Luther with all the force of her big healthy body. Benjo Sprouse, John's brother, described as "a small mischievous, dirty little man who was never known to have done useful labour in his life", pays his attention to Sis. And so we are introduced to an atmosphere steaming with sex, race prejudice, and foregone conclusions. At least, readers who are at all familiar with the facts and present literary fashion will find nothing to surprise them.

Mr. Flannagan does well, if not brilliantly, by his bitter theme. Although he follows in beaten paths, his information gives no im-

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pression of being second-hand. He also knows his Negroes and poor whites with the intimacy of long experience. As propaganda, written quite objectively, this novel is of value in condemning Southern lynch-law and in showing what frequently lies behind its ostensible purpose. Otherwise it is of not much significance except as the second novel of an author who may show great improvement when he has worked himself through the more obvious aspects of his material.

ARCHER WINSTEN

THE GETTING OF WISDOM *by Henry Handel Richardson* (NORTON. $2.50)

IT IS not hard to see why Henry Handel Richardson has chosen this book, slight though it necessarily is in comparison with *Maurice Guest* and that rather overpowering work, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, as her favourite. By reason of its obvious truth and simplicity and its deep understanding of the life of an adolescent girl, one may be permitted to suspect that it is a recorded chapter from its author's own life—in so far, at least, as its outlines are concerned. From material which has generally been used only by writers of juvenile fiction she has constructed a curiously veracious and unflinching chronicle.

Laura Rambotham, a sensitive, unformed, passionate and stubborn little girl of twelve, emerges from the environment of her provincial middle-class home into the life of a large and strictly governed boarding school. She wants desperately to be popular, but cannot quite master the formula. She errs now on the side of obsequiousness, now on the side of a bristling independence. By turns she is shy or aggressive, reserved or ingratiating, or merely childish and silly. She suffers keenly at the hands of the richer and more snobbish pupils, she has a violent crush on one of the older girls, she attains an evanescent popularity by a course of dramatic lying and is exposed and sent to Coventry. Unlovable as she sometimes is, one is aware that the very traits which contribute to her adolescent misery may one day make her a woman of commanding character. Her future is something we are never allowed to guess, for she is still a coltish jumble of diverse and opposed tendencies when we take our leave of her. The faint but bitter irony of which Henry Handel Richardson is mistress scarcely appears in this book, except in its title.

MARGARET WALLACE

FATHERS OF THEIR PEOPLE *by H. W. Freeman* (HOLT. $2.50)

ON THE paper jacket of this book is a woodcut which depicts a farmer behind a team of horses plowing a field. There is plowed and unplowed ground; to the left are a tree and a church steeple; there is a cloud in the sky and the farmer has a pipe in his mouth. It is a lazy woodcut and makes little effort to intrigue the eye. There is no style, nor intensity, nor originality about it. It is plain. Like this woodcut is the novel it illustrates. *Fathers of Their People* is plain.

The story is of the lives of well-to-do Suffolk farmers, and in particular it treats of ten years of the adolescence and young manhood of the only son of a family which has held a prominent position in the country-side for three centuries. The author's attitude is strictly that of the story-teller; there is no moralizing, unless deliberately frank descriptions of love-making and other pleasures of the flesh may be counted as such. The daily round of farming life is abundantly por-

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trayed, and the concurrent run of dramatic incidents. The characters are simple, honest, hard-working, contented and monotonously alike. There is no major issue or crisis to bring them out of their shells and the author does not seem to feel the need of one. He writes clearly and easily in simple sentences and, without much sensitivity to words, takes those closest to hand. The result is that he does not attain any considerable degree of vitality or even accuracy of expression. One has recurrently the impression that Mr. Freeman has written this book mainly for the purpose of showing to the world a form of life of which he approves, and that he has consciously let considerations of expression and character portrayal, development and inter-relation go by the board.

The publishers of *Fathers of Their People* claim for Mr. Freeman's first novel *Joseph and His Brethren,* an American sale of one hundred thousand copies. If this novel, which is Mr. Freeman's third, attains anything approaching that figure, it will certainly denote an extraordinary interest and even hunger among our public for news of the soil.

JOHN BRONSON

THE STORE *by T. S. Stribling* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

A SOUTHERN colonel in a small Alabama town during the early nineties, a colonel who had won his title in the war and proved it in the Klan—this man and the years wherein he tried to restore to his life the physical and spiritual conditions of the pre-war South form the backbone of Mr. Stribling's latest and voluminous novel, *The Store,* which is the second of a triology upon the Reconstruction days of the South.

The devious tangle of human relations in this village resulting from caste, natural determination, exterior influence, accident and the development of characters within these meshes as the author has conceived it, presents patterns, contrasts and extremities in human behaviour which are the material for a novel of considerable social and historical significance. The village seethes with conflicts between old and new loyalties. Solid against the North, it is divided within itself. The penurious aristocrat and rising commercialist alike struggle to reconcile their social with their economic positions. The Negroes are torn between their ancient allegiance to the aristocrat who treats them kindly but still continues to think of them as slaves and the plain white who abuses them yet recognizes their new status. Among these many cross- and counter-currents Colonel Vaiden's crime evokes issues which test and change lives in all classes.

In spite of this excellent material *The Store* is a vague and redundant work. The author seems more to have outlined his subject than developed it. His approach is dominantly objective, embracing much prosaic dialogue, yet—and this is objectionably noticeable—giving only meagre attention to the exteriors of the life he describes. The appearance of the characters must be deducted from their actions. But Mr. Stribling's revelations of their inner workings are so coarse and lacking in detail upon individual peculiarities that we are left with but little to go by. One has the impression of a number of persons, fat, thin, young, old, a crowd of names passing through experiences which are rather mentioned than described. The story does not blossom and grow from the characters; rather are they impressed as puppets to play the rôles of it. And, since the author does not do it, it falls to the reader to supply their motive power.

JOHN BRONSON

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THE RUNNING FOOTMAN *by John Owen* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

EVEN today there are servants who run for their masters and masters who accept their servants as chattel. There are still simple souls, and men who fall in love with their betters. So it is that *The Running Footman*, John Owen's third novel, a story of a century and a half ago, can still move us.

The duty of John Deere, twenty years old, is to run before the coach of his master, announcing him wherever he desires to go. For a while he runs without other purpose than to please his mother (for John is a simple soul). Then he falls in love. And since the lady is a member of the household, above him in station, he loves her in vain, unless the awakening to Beauty is compensation for his pain and the physical exhaustion he endures running about for her.

It is a straight tale, but for a good third of the book the author leads us ploddingly up-hill: he halts, starts and side-tracks, now with an irrelevant characterization, now with a platitude surprising in a writer who can be both witty and keen. As the book progresses, however, the pace becomes swifter.

Owen's is a quaint story, and its servant-hero, with his universal passion, is a truly pathetic figure. Indeed, were the book more pretentious and the epithet less stigmatizing, it might be said that *The Running Footman* is a delicate bit of propaganda.

VIVIAN O. WEINER

BROKEN ARCS *by Erika Zastrow* (HOLT. $2.50)

IT IS obvious that in writing her first novel Miss Zastrow intended to present the purely emotional phase of her characters' lives, and to be concerned only with that inner search which is so important to sensitive natures. Too often, however, she disregards other factors that influence the emotional life, and the conclusion to be drawn from her book is not made clear. The story begins in a small German town where Anne-Marie Thorn endeavours through childhood to discover some deep significance in life and finds happiness in her father's love and spiritual guidance. Upon his death, Anne-Marie disregards her love for a young minister and enters a religious order. In part two the scene shifts to America, where Christian von Hofbrau earns a meagre living teaching music and struggles to attain happiness in marriage with Emily, the daughter of an American farmer. After a winter of hardship and bitter enmity between Emily and the woman who owns the farm, Emily dies.

Then we see Anne-Marie again, after twelve years, regretting her secluded life. In New York Anne-Marie and Christian meet and form a relationship which will, presumably, provide the emotional support they have both lacked. But if we are to take seriously the author's choice of a quotation from Browning on which *Broken Arcs* is based—"In the heavens the perfect round"—then we must conclude that this ending is only a second best.

MARGARET FOWLER

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE *by Radclyffe Hall* (CAPE & BALLOU. $2.50)

READERS who identify Radclyffe Hall with *The Well of Loneliness* will find *The Master of the House* a surprise in certain respects. Instead of the stiff English gentry and the nondescript rabble of the Parisian *boîtes de nuit*, we are here introduced to a scene so primitive and to people so simple

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and normal that page after page of the book may be turned with a feeling of real refreshment, to which will be added the pleasure of a style much more uniformly distinguished than that of the earlier volume—sentences with a cadence, paragraphs with a smooth even flow, whole chapters (I have in mind especially the opening chapter) which are worthy to be included in some anthology of narrative masterpieces.

The story begins with the birth of the hero, Christophe, the first-born of a carpenter named Jóusè Bénédit in the small seaport town of Saint-Loup in Provence.

Christophe develops into a tall healthy lad, marked by a certain oddity. The son of a carpenter, he early manifests an almost morbid propensity for taking on himself the pains and the sorrows of his fellow creatures. By his wounds they are doubtless not healed, but they are at least fortified. The pains shared become so exalting as a testimonial of love that they almost cease to be pains. He cannot restore the infirm but he can make their lot less desolate. Only all of this costs so much and his strong young body clamours for freedom and enjoyment, so that always he seems to recoil and to pray that the cup may pass from him.

This is not the first time that a hero of Radclyffe Hall's has turned out to be less a person than a predicament—a predicament, moreover, from which there was little chance of emerging. It will be remembered that Stephen, in *The Well of Loneliness*, was defended on the ground of her "selflessness". Christophe's selflessness is so marked that it raises a question whether being selfless is not just a way of not being anything, not even a character. Miss Hall takes refuge in subterfuge, making out that Christophe is not a character in his own right but the shadow of a character so immense that her whole structure seems in the end to be dragged down by the sheer weight of the underpinning. A half-wit cousin is convinced that Christophe is the Christ; Christophe does not quite dare to believe it (can one picture Christ not daring to affirm his own claims?); but the author establishes the identification in a closing scene which throws a belated stress upon German *fürchtbarkeit* without much enhancing one's understanding either of Christophe or of Christ.

Meanwhile, *The Master of the House* affords an engaging picture of Saint-Loup-sur-Mer, "on a stretch of coast which before the war was seldom visited by strangers, cleansed by strong winds and purified by sunshine"; of Elize and her sailor spouse; of Mélanie, who presided at drunken revelries at the Tarasque; of Christophe's fanatical cousin, Jan, and of Jan's vainglorious mother—in short a whole meridional atmosphere worthy of a Francis of Assisi, ample compensation for the disappointment one feels at the author's failure to cope with a problem which, it must be admitted, cannot be essayed without incurring great risk.

ROBERTS TAPLEY

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

(Continued from page 183)

be observed, however, that there were plenty of cases both in America and England where these buyers sold at the "right time" and made surprising profits. Nevertheless, the introduction of the investor or speculator was a new factor, and a disturbing one.

Another influential factor in competition and prices during the famous Ten Years was the sudden concentration upon "points" and "parts" in regard to rare first editions. This is too large and intricate a phase of the subject to enter into now. When the history of book-collecting is written in the future, the first quarter of the twentieth century will be noted as of outstanding importance for its discoveries of unknown rarities, for the developments of first-edition classification and the elaboration of "points", and for the new and lively interest in so-called "modern" first editions. All these things meant work and intense specialization; and they also fed the flames of the already flaring competition. Hence, another factor responsible for the high prices.

There remains one other phase of the subject—and it is a delicate one: the new interest in "modern" firsts, as just mentioned. It is a delicate phase because this comparatively new interest has practically split collectors into two parties—on the one hand, the connoisseurs of old books who, behind their volumed ramparts of the Immortals, rather look down at the "moderns"; on the other hand, the "moderns" enthusiasts who, having neither the curiosity nor perhaps the temperament for the "dull" old glories in calf or original boards, are lured by the high adventure of new literature in the making.

As a commentator I must be neutral. In truth, my friends are in both camps, and my interests in each field. To say anything in favour of collecting in the old fields of literature is as out of place as writing an advertisement poster to Parnassus. As for the "moderns", there is one point which is often overlooked or unrecognized by their critics: that we have been, and are, passing through an amazingly virile period in literature, and that its interests for the student-collector are greater than in many previous periods.

But when it comes to collecting the "moderns", it must be admitted that here, more than in any other field, the intensity of the competition was less understandable, and the fall in prices has been severest. There is one explanation which I have not seen put forward, and is important to keep in mind: it is significant and admonitory. There was the same competition, arising from the same combination of causes, for the first editions of modern authors. Time came when the collectors and the investors or speculators in this field were found to be supplied, while yet the flow of copies into the market continued. It is now evident that the supply of "firsts" in this field was, in the majority of cases, greater than was realized at the time their prices were mounting, and far greater in proportion to the demand than in the other field. That the fall should be severer and more general is natural. Although the result will mean some adjustment—perhaps a considerable one—of ideas and collecting appreciations as to the "moderns", there still remains that minority of cases in which the supply of first editions is, or certainly will be, unequal to the eventual demand. Also, there are the works of authors which will be even more esteemed with the passing of time. These are two important considerations to set against the more difficult situation pre-

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sented as a consequence of the new interest in the so-called "modern" authors.

I have set out these considerations of the subject because they will enable us to get the right perspective. There still remains the fact that prices have fallen and that there is uneasiness in some quarters (though not all) which may react unfavourably on book-collecting. Were the prices realized during the eventful Ten Years so fantastic that they will never recur? Will there be a new level of values even in normal times? On these crucial points here are some further considerations that are apt to be overlooked:

(1) That not all prices have fallen; (2) that there are plenty of collectors wholly unaffected by the events of the Ten Years; and others whose activities are only suspended until something like normal economic conditions return; (3) that association books, literary MSS and autograph letters are *unique* items. There is no question, in the cases of these, of how many copies are in existence, as with individual first editions. Such rarities have fallen least; and are likely the soonest to regain their former level; (4) that of the book and manuscript rarities that have passed through the market during the historic Ten Years, a very considerable proportion has been acquired by or given to public libraries or state institutions of the United States (chiefly) and also Britain. This means that they have gone out of circulation—gone forever beyond the acquisition of private collectors. What this proportion is, it would be difficult—perhaps impossible—to estimate. To take only one example of many that could be given: there is Mr. Folger's Shakespeare Library, which was dedicated this spring in Washington—80,000 volumes (the majority rare and important), including seventy-nine copies of the hundred and ninety-five known survivors of the First Folio. I am inclined to

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estimate the proportion which has generally thus passed out of the range of collectors as twenty-five percent. I do not think it can be less; it may be higher. The more treasures that go into our museums and Public Libraries, the more valuable become the rarities left in circulation. The point need not be enlarged upon; (5) that for the last hundred and fifty years the values of rare books and manuscripts have steadily increased in value; and this despite the fact that with the increase of collectors and the growth of Bibliographical science there has been a continuous unearthing of copies. I have at my right hand, as I write, original documents of the first quarter of the last century, showing that even men like Richard Heber (who spent $500,000 on his collection), Sir Walter Scott, and John Kemble were at times outbid at the book-sales, and grumbled at the high prices. At the famous Roxburghe sale in 1812, the Duke's copy of the First Folio Shakespeare "soared" amidst "breathless silence" to $500. After the "boom" following the Napoleonic Wars there was a slump during which booksellers, bankers, and commercial houses on all sides went bankrupt. Nevertheless, the prices of literary and art treasures reasserted themselves, and continued to increase. The "record" of $500 for the Duke's First Folio rose to $50,000 during the "peak" period we have been reviewing.

I am not—and have no reason to be—an apologist for high prices. They are something beyond our control. We must all wish, when we look back to the days of Heber, Roxburghe, Scott, and Dibdin, that we could only have the chance of acquiring what they thought so dear. It may well be that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will look back longingly to our day and sigh for our opportunities.

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BON VOYAGE

The Old Familiar Paths of Yesterday

BY ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

THE personal note which the Editor of THE BOOKMAN allows and encourages in these little Bon Voyage papers perhaps needs a word of explanation, if not of apology. It is not, as a critical reader at times might imagine, in any sense a pose; simply the natural expression of a lifetime's impressions. The reviewer, taken to Europe for the first time as a boy of eight, counting fourteen transatlantic crossings before he was out of his teens, has been enthusiastically following the early-acquired habit in subsequent years.

Naturally books of travel stir personal memories and invite personal comment, particularly when, as in the present case, they deal with what may be called the old familiar paths of yesterday. To illustrate; here is Miss Clara E. Laughlin's *So You're Going to Ireland and Scotland!* (Houghton Mifflin. $3.50). The reviewer has always had a liking for Miss Laughlin's travel books, finding them entertaining, efficient, and reliable. At the sight of certain familiar names the years fall away and memory brings back a bicycle trip of long years ago. Miss Laughlin begins just where the reviewer began, first at Cobh, which was Queenstown when the world was young, and Cork, and then on to Glengariff and Killarney. Here the personal note enters intrusively. Miss Laughlin says to take the Prince of Wales route. The reviewer's advice is to do nothing of the kind, but instead to follow the road past Blarney Castle, thence through the Lakes of Inchigeelagh, on to Macroom, and after a side visit to the lonely tarn of Gougane Barra, where a famous hermit saint lived in the sixteenth century, down to Glengariff by way of the Deer or Keim-an-eigh.

When Miss Laughlin turns from Ireland to Scotland the literary note predominates more than in any of her earlier books. It could hardly be otherwise. Scotland is preeminently the land of literary associations. In France a man otherwise intelligent might with profit travel for a year only dimly aware that Molière and Corneille, Hugo and Balzac, ever existed; for a like time in England with a knowledge of no other name of letters than that of Shakespeare. But imagine anyone in Ayrshire or Dumfriesshire being unconscious of Burns!

The next book in hand, W. T. Palmer's *The English Lakes* (Farrar & Rinehart. $3.00), suggests revision or modification of a statement made in the preceding paragraph. Certainly no one could well visit the English Lake region without absorbing a smattering at least of Wordsworth and Coleridge and Ruskin and Tennyson and Shelley and Southey. Four of Mr. Palmer's twenty-two chapters are devoted to "Wordsworthshire", a term invented by James Russell Lowell. The literary flavour of the region is not entirely a tradition of yesterday. Hugh Walpole is now a resident of Keswick and has written of the Lake Country in his novel *Rogue Herries*.

In the ninth volume of his familiar Travel-talk series, *Seeing London* (Funk & Wagnalls. $5.00), Mr. E. M. Newman tells of

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